■ ENTERTAINMENT / A2-1
The Gils are alive ... and starring in Cinemalaya 2006 entries

■ BUSINESS / B1
GMA extends SPV law by 2 years

■ NEWS / A11
RP's 1st integrated ethanol plant to rise in Negros Oriental

■ WORLD / A22
Tape mocks US failure to capture Osama bin Laden

Top DepEd exec fires parting shot at GMA

By Alcuin Papa

IN A PARTING BLAST AT PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo, former Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel "Mike" Luz has accused her administration of focusing on political expediency and placing little value on genuine education reforms.

Luz spelled out his grievances in a three-page resignation letter to Ms Arroyo dated April 19,

TOP DEPED/ A8

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, April 25, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 136 P18 website: www.inq7.net

UK women prefer cleaning house to sex, says survey

MAS RELAXING MAG-LINIS KESA MA-KASAMA SI MISTER!

LONDON—THE GOOD news for lazy British men is that women find domestic chores "mentally therapeutic"—the bad news is that many prefer house cleaning to making love, according to details of a survey published Monday.

UK WOMEN/ A10

Lifting of VAT on oil seen

El Shaddai leader steps into Palace, Senate row

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE LEADER OF EL SHADDAI yesterday called on President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Senate to resolve new differences prompted by the Supreme Court decision upholding the right of Congress to call officials to hearings in aid of legislation.

"I think most Filipinos now are of the desire that the executive and the legislative branches of our government should really come together to work things out," said Bro. Mariano "Mike" Velarde in an interview with the INQUIRER.

"It's time to reach out. This war of words is not helping, not doing us any good," said the leader of the five-million-strong Catholic charismatic group and spiritual adviser to Ms Arroyo.

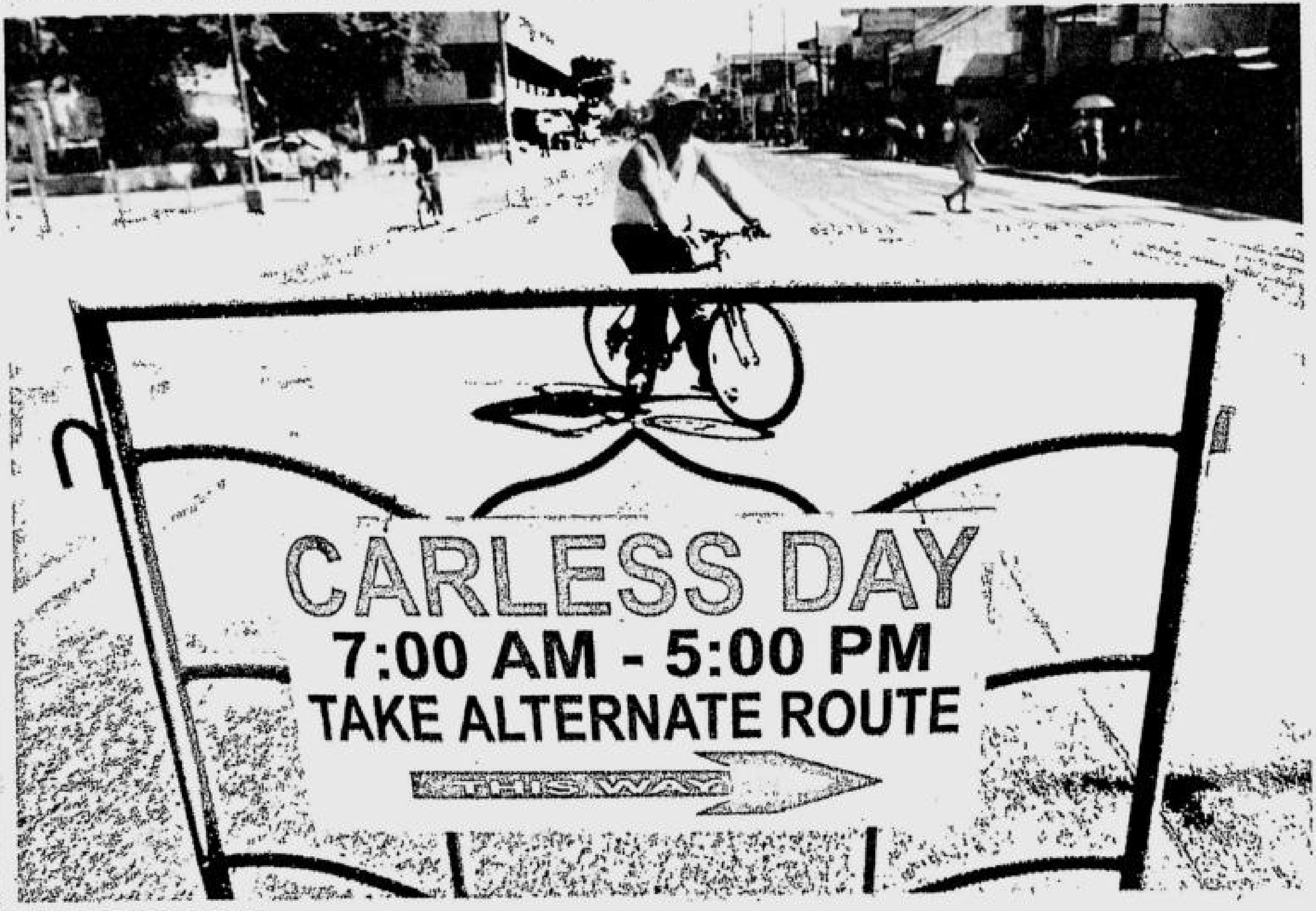
Velarde warned an escalation of the war of words between the Palace and its critics could be disastrous.

"They should not underestimate what people are thinking today," said Velarde, who has been trying to mediate differences between Ms Arroyo and her political opponents, including ousted President Joseph Estrada.

He said the Supreme Court decision last week was a boost to democracy. He advised Palace officials to respect the ruling.

Velarde also appealed to the senators not to abuse their pre-

EL SHADDAI/ A10



CLEAR AND CLEAN
Cyclists and pedestrians had the main streets of Marikina City all to themselves from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. yesterday, when vehicles were banned as part of local measures to commemorate Earth Day.
RAFFY LERMA

Plan draws bipartisan support in House

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Michael Lim Ubac and Michelle V. Remo

SEEKING TO SOFTEN the impact of surging crude oil prices on the public, Malacañang yesterday proposed exempting petroleum products from the 12-percent expanded value-added tax (VAT) and the 3-percent import tariff.

Exempting fuel from the VAT would reduce the pump price of unleaded gasoline by P3 a liter, according to Albay Rep. Joey Salceda.

But the Department of Finance said lifting the tax would cost the government P29 billion yearly, while scrapping the tariff would mean P7.5 billion in foregone revenue.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, said the proposal would be studied "collectively" by the country's economic managers and lawmakers.

Defensor said that while the executive branch could scrap the tariff on oil imports through presidential fiat, exempting oil from the VAT would require the consent of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

"The executive will meet with the energy committees and ways and means committees of both chambers to discuss the various options in alleviating the impact of higher oil prices," said Defensor in an interview with reporters.

The government imposed a 10-percent VAT on previously exempted items, like petroleum products, electricity and medical and legal services on Nov. 1 to help address the fiscal deficit. It raised the rate to 12 percent on Feb. 1.

The idea of exempting petroleum products from the VAT has received bipartisan support from members of the House of Representatives.

A total of 146 of the 236-member chamber had already signed a resolution seeking to suspend the VAT on petroleum products,

LIFTING A6

6 solons, Gringo charged with rebellion

By Leila B. Salaverria and Tarra V. Quismundo

SAYING THEIR PARTY-LIST groups were communist fronts, state prosecutors yesterday filed rebellion charges in court against six congressmen, along with a former senator and 41 other people, for allegedly hatching an "intricate web" of conspiracies to overthrow President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The sweeping indictment appeared to have spared few among known dissident leaders, lumping together strange bedfellows—from ex-Sen. Gregorio Honasan and Magdalo soldiers, to Communist Party founder Jose Ma. Sison and spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, and National Democratic Front leader Luis Jalandoni.

The alleged plot to topple Ms Arroyo was supposed to include an attack on Malacañang.

All were charged with a capital offense punishable by life imprisonment.

The six congressmen charged were party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, Crispin Beltran and Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, and Liza Maza of Gabriela.

The charges were actually filed late on Friday but the DOJ did not announce their action until yesterday. The complaint listed several John Does.

The lawmakers immediately denounced the haste with which the Department of Justice prosecution team filed the charges.

"We vehemently protest and

6 SOLONS/ A6

EDWIN BACASMAS

THE REMAINS of former beauty queen, actress and TV host Chat Silayan lie at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park.

Former beauty queen Chat Silayan dies; 46

By Marinel R. Cruz
Entertainment

SHE WAS ONLY 46. MA. Rosario "Chat" Silayan—1980 Miss Universe third runner-up, actress and, most recently, TV host—died Sunday night after a two-year bout with colon cancer.

Only family and close friends had known she was sick.

"Chat kept her illness a secret to avoid a media circus. Also, she didn't want the public to see her in such a state," said Rene Salud, her fashion designer, friend and mentor.

Salud said even he didn't know Silayan had fallen ill until a year after the cancer was diagnosed.

"It came to me as a great shock," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday. "I wished I could do something to help her."

Silayan died at around 8 p.m. at St. Luke's Medical Cen-

EX-BEAUTY/ A9

UP chancellor to graduates: We didn't teach you to be exported

By DJ Yap
Metro

MEMBERS OF GRADUATING Class 2006 of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, may have proven themselves to be of "export-quality," worthy of employment anywhere in the First World.

But their chancellor has a gentle, somewhat stern, reminder for them: "Wherever you go, remember that we did not teach you just to be exported."

"If you're not going to be part of the solution to the country's woes, then please do not become part of the problem," said Chancellor Sergio Cao, addressing almost 4,000 graduates during the premier state university's 95th commencement exercises on Sunday.

The new graduates should use their skills and talents where they are most needed—right here in their own country—rather than search for greener pastures and fatter paychecks elsewhere, according to Cao.

In a four-hour ceremony, accompanied by the UP Symphonic Orchestra, the graduates were formally bestowed their degrees at the Amphitheater.

This year's batch had a total of 3,963 graduating students. Diliman, the largest among the units in the UP System, has 15 colleges, four institutes and four schools, two centers and one program.

Of the total number of graduates, 3,177 received baccalaureate degrees, 717 masteral de-

UP CHANCELLOR/ A8

Junior Inquirer Unicef Hall of Fame awardee

By Ruth L. Navarra

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER again scored a grand slam at the Unicef-Philippine Press Institute's Child-Friendly Newspaper and Journalist Awards.

On Sunday night, it won four awards:

- The Philippine Daily Inquirer was named for the fourth time the Child-Friendly Newspaper of the Year (national broadsheet category).
- For the fifth consecutive year, the Junior Inquirer won the Outstanding Children's Newspaper/Section award.
- Because of its feat, the Junior Inquirer was elevated to the Awards' Hall of Fame.
- INQUIRER columnist Michael Tan received the award for Outstanding Column on Children for "Kids behind bars," published on Aug. 12, 2005, in his column "Pinoy Kasi."

Madonna T. Virola, the INQUIRER's correspondent for Mindoro, also received a similar award for "Pagtingin ng sikolohiya sa gifted

JUNIOR/ A9

UNICEF - PPI
Child-F lly Newspaper
urnal ward

INQUIRER publisher Isagani Yambot (center) and Junior Inquirer's Ruth Navarra (left) and Dianne Villafuerte show off the Unicef-PPI awards.

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms becoming frequent rains over Southern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/04/24/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Labor walkouts, pickets begin today

By Jerome Aning and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

LABOR GROUPS PLAN TO STAGE NATIONWIDE walkouts, pickets and other forms of protests today at the start of pre-Labor Day activities to push for higher wages in anticipation of the "domino effect" of rising oil prices on basic commodities.

Kilusang Mayo Uno chair Elmer Labog said factory workers from around 50 companies in Pasig City, Valenzuela City and other areas in Metro Manila and nearby industrial belts will join the protests.

He said workers at Manila's North Harbor will also stop working for two hours while urban poor groups from various communities will conduct local assemblies.

Workers from Central and Southern Luzon industrial enclaves as well as cities in Bicol, Cebu, Panay and Mindanao will also hold factory-based protests and picket offices of the Department of Labor, Labog said.

"Ordinary Filipino workers and consumers cannot absorb the domino effect of the surging prices of local petroleum products," he said at a forum in Manila's Philippine Christian University. "Oil companies and businesses are expected to pass on the high oil prices to consumers in the form of additional market prices of almost all consumer goods."

He noted that the minimum wage in Metro Manila was still pegged at P275, far below the estimated P690 daily cost of living for a family of six.

"Our demand for P125 across-the-board, across-the-county wage hike is therefore very justified at this time," Labog added.

Also yesterday, the Alliance of Progressive Labor warned Malacañang against suppressing planned May Day activities.

"We will hold the traditional Labor Day march and any untoward violence will not come from the workers' line," said Josua Mata, APL secretary general.

Mata was reacting to Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor's warning that the government would not hesitate to re-impose a state of emergency should the May 1 rallies turn violent.

"It's a lame excuse to prevent massive protests on May 1 that the workers will undoubtedly use as the most opportune time to call for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation and present anti-Charter change sentiments," Mata said.

KMU spokesperson Prestoline Suyat allayed fears that the May 1 protests would be violent.

"You won't make trouble in your own birthday celebration," he said. "Malacañang is just fooling the people in saying that the Labor Day protests would be violent."

"We are warning Malacañang against disrupting the workers celebration of May 1 as they did in the dispersal of the women's march last March 8," said Mata.

Meanwhile, a military spokesperson said yesterday that all units had been placed on alert to prevent rogue soldiers from using the May Day rallies to mount another attempt to topple Ms Arroyo.

Citing an alleged plot by military and communist rebels dubbed "Oplan 4G," a spokesperson said military units had been told to prepare for any "eventualities" during the May Day observance.

"Oplan 4G" was mentioned in documents the military claims to have recovered from escaped Oakwood mutineer Army 1Lt. Lawrence San Juan when he was re-captured last Feb. 21.

The documents supposedly call for organizing anti-Arroyo rallies with 200,000 to 500,000 participants culminating on May 1 when an armed component would join the rallyists.

"The Chief of Staff has directed all units to remain vigilant and to prepare for that. We have to make sure the AFP is prepared for any eventuality for May 1 based on the plan stated in the document," said Lt. Commodore Earl Pabalan, deputy chief of the AFP's public information office.

"These are not preparations against civilians or groups that will stage mass actions. This is to ensure those who are not part of mass actions will freely go through their activities," he said.

At the same time, however, he downplayed the capability of rebel troops to mount a coup.

"We are confident those who planned to withdraw support have already been identified. As far as the AFP is concerned, we would not experience another [scenario] similar to that last Feb. 24," Pabalan said. *With Jerald Uy*

Job fairs to mark gov't Labor Day celebration

By Jerome Aning

THE GOVERNMENT WILL MARK Labor Day next week with a series of "mega job fairs" offering 30,000 local and overseas employment opportunities for fresh graduates and the jobless, the labor department has announced.

About 100 local employers and 50 licensed recruiters will participate in the main fair that organizer Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) will host at the Quezon City Hall covered walk on May 1, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

However, the militant labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno scoffed at the job fairs, calling the activity "government propaganda than a serious attempt to solve joblessness."

KMU national chair Elmer Labog questioned the quality of jobs offered in the fairs, claiming that they did not solve the country's unemployment problem and could even worsen underemployment.

"Many jobs offered in these fairs are contractual. Worse, those who go often end up taking jobs unrelated to their college courses or training because the jobs they're looking for are often unavailable in the fair," Labog told reporters in an interview.

"And because jobs are unavailable here, the unemployed look for jobs abroad. In fact, those who are still studying want to work abroad, leading to the further depletion of our skilled workers," he added.

Labog said the best generator of jobs in the country was still agriculture and this could only be realized if the government fully implemented its land reform program in favor of the peasants.

Labor Undersecretary for Employment Danilo Cruz, chair of the department's Labor Day Steering Committee, disagreed with Labog saying that the jobs offered in the fair are "productive" and would benefit all kinds of job seekers, be they fresh graduates, out-of-school youths, skilled workers and disadvantaged persons.

Registration at the TUCP job fair is free. Job seekers will be given a chance to undergo jobs and skills matching through the government's Computerized National Manpower Registry System.

Phil-Jobnet, the department's online job-finding system, along with the so-called "rolling stores" of the National Food Authority, will also be set up in the fair.

Other job fairs will be held next week in Baguio, San Fernando in La Union, Tuguegarao, San Pablo City, Calintaan in Occidental Mindoro, Lobo in Camarines Norte, Libon, Albay, Bacolod, Tacloban, Butuan, Zamboanga, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, General Santos in South Cotabato, Koronadal and Tacurong in Sultan Kudarat and Kidapawan in North Cotabato.

Militants press claim of military harassment

By Luige A. del Puerto

MILITANTS PRESSED THEIR ATTACK against the military yesterday, saying documents they had obtained showed that left-leaning organizations would be listed in the military's "Order of Battle."

The documents clearly showed that sectoral organizations were to be monitored and cased, according to the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, one of the critics of the military.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has dismissed the KMP's claims, saying many such documents had cropped up in the past but they were not from the military.

The KMP provided the INQUIRER copies of the documents, one of which was titled "Institutionalizing the Conduct of Target Research as a Major Component in the Intelligence Project Preparation in Particular, and Intelligence Cycle Process, in General."

The paper recommended the conduct of "extensive research" on "sectoral and NDF (National Democratic Front) front organizations."

"This effort is a shift from the traditional area study that was being undertaken for three decades but never produced a major input in the AFP's counterinsurgency operations," the document stated.

"The output of the target research on a sector will be subjected to a sectoral/front organization Order of Battle (OB) validation ...," it added.

The KMP and groups under the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan have been labeled by the military as allies and legal fronts of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The paper also said a "case build-up" would be part of the research "targeting personalities and sectoral organization(s) supporting the CPP/NPA/NDF and/or personalities within these sectoral/front organizations."

"This proves beyond doubt that it is the AFP that is behind the close monitoring, surveillance and ... killings of political activists critical of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration," the KMP said.

Military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Jose Angel Honrado challenged the militants to produce the documents to verify their authenticity.

He said the military had a strategy to counter the communist threat but it did not include above-ground organizations.

"It is not government policy (to) direct the AFP or the PNP to harass (or) intimidate legal organizations. It is not government policy to repress them," he had said.

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Cha-cha 'cover' for GMA cheating in polls—Guingona

By Jerome Aning

FORMER VICE PRESIDENT TEOFISTO Guingona Jr. yesterday renewed calls for President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign and for her administration to stop pushing for Charter change.

Speaking in a forum organized by the Kilusang Mayo Uno at Manila's Philippine Christian University, Guingona also stressed the need for Filipinos to be united in battling corruption and exposing anomalies in the government.

"We should have more fire to fight the forces of evil so that the Philippines can be free and independent once again," he said, warning that Filipinos might be beaten by the Nepalese, who are also staging prodemocracy protests against their king.

The former Vice President called Cha-cha the "biggest cover-up" for Ms Arroyo's cheating in the 2004 election as well as the scandals plaguing her administration.

"If Cha-cha is successful, all the scandals involving Ms Arroyo would be forgotten, because there will be a new government with her as president and prime minister; there will no longer be any impeachment," he said.

He also criticized the ongoing people's initiative for Cha-cha, citing examples of how people in the provinces were deceived into signing the petition to amend the Constitution.

"Let us not debate on which is better —presidential or parliamentary form of government," Guingona said. "That's not the issue; the issue is the process with which it is being pushed, through manipulation of the people's initiative."

He added: "We should redouble our opposition against Cha-cha. We will campaign, we will fight, we will do everything in order that Cha-cha will not succeed."

Guingona warned that any cover-up would prove to be the perpetrator's undoing. He recalled the case of former US President Richard Nixon who was forced to resign in the '70s after trying to cover up the burglary at the Democratic Party offices in the Watergate building.

The burglary was traced to the White House and Nixon, to avoid an impeachment trial, opted to resign. He said Nixon's act contradicted that of Ms Arroyo's who remains in Malacañang despite the pieces of evidence presented by the opposition to prove her alleged involvement in election cheating and other anomalies such as the fertilizer fund, the NorthRail project and Venable contract scandals.

Guingona recalled that Nixon used money to silence the Watergate controversy but the truth eventually came out. *With Jerald Uy*

Saudi cops free 14 Pinoys

By Volt Contreras

SAUDI POLICE HAVE STARTED RELEASING several Filipinos arrested over the past three weeks in connection with the discovery of body parts and the disappearance of three other Filipinos in Jeddah.

The Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday said at least 14 detainees had been freed out of the 52 Filipinos who were rounded up, following the "confession" of seven suspects last week.

The release came days after the DFA summoned Saudi Ambassador to Manila Mohammed Ameen Mohammed Wali over human rights concerns and the "incommunicado" status of the detainees which prevented Philippine consular officials from immediately coming to their aid.

The 14 ex-detainees had been handed over to either their employers or sponsors, the department said, citing a report from the Philippine consulate in Jeddah.

Seven Filipinos had admitted to killing three of their compatriots, whose bodies were feared to be those found dismembered and dumped in garbage bags south of Jeddah on April 4.

Saudi police, who have yet to file formal charges, told the consulate last week that "rivalry" over illegal lottery operations could have triggered the brutal killings.

This angle emerged after one of the seven suspects and one of the three victims were both found to have run lotteries "in competition."

With the DFA still reluctant to disclose the identities of the suspects and the victims, an INQUIRER source in Jeddah revealed that the warring lottery operators—or at least the financiers—were Filipinos who were from Pampanga.

Imelda wants foundation to benefit from deal

By Alcuin Papa

FORMER FIRST LADY IMELDA MARCOS wants a foundation of her choice to receive part of the proceeds of any compromise agreement her family may enter into with the Presidential Commission on Good Government on the Marcos wealth.

PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede said this was the condition set by Marcos for a deal. An "influential representative" of Marcos acting as negotiator had transmitted the message to Abcede.

"The representative said part of the wealth would go to a foundation that they would designate," Abcede said.

The PCGG commissioner said he started "exploratory talks" with the unnamed representative Thursday night for a possible settlement on the Marcos wealth, estimated at between $5 and $10 billion.

By law, all recovered Marcos wealth was supposed to go to the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). But after 2008, he said the proceeds should go directly to the national treasury.

Abcede said the PCGG would have to investigate the foundation picked by Marcos to receive the proceeds.

"I am not saying that we will [allot the proceeds to a foundation]. In the first place, we have to examine if [the condition] is legal because there is a law that all proceeds of the PCGG should go to CARP," he said.

An allotment to a foundation would be possible only through legislation by Congress, Abcede said.

He added that he was confident a compromise on the Marcos wealth could be drafted and approved by the courts this year.

Former PCGG chair Jovito Salonga said a deal with the Marcoses would have "shameful implications" and asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to stop the PCGG from negotiating with the Marcos family, as well as with businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

In a statement released to the media yesterday, Salonga reminded the PCGG of the December 1998 Supreme Court decision penned by now Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban declaring the compromise deal at that time between the government and the Marcoses illegal.

House mulls harsher penalty for convicts

By Philip C. Tubeza and Leila B. Salaverria

TO ENSURE THAT HEINOUS CRIME VICTIMS GET justice even if the death penalty is abolished, a ranking House leader yesterday said Congress was considering a harsher form of life sentence—at least 40 years at hard labor for convicts before they could be considered for parole.

House Deputy Majority Leader Eduardo Gullas said Congress was considering the proposal that a person convicted of a heinous crime be incarcerated for "the rest of his natural life"—a minimum of 40 years, or until he reaches the age of 70—before becoming eligible for parole.

He said the harsher form of life sentence, known as "qualified reclusion perpetua," would require 40 years in captivity "with productive hard labor and absolutely no allowances for good behavior."

"This means the [heinous crime] convict must reach 70 [years] or spend a minimum of 40 years in prison, excluding time served before conviction, or even if he shows meritorious demeanor," Gullas said.

At present, a "life termer" would become eligible for parole after serving only one-half of the prison term, or after 15 to 20 years, he said.

The convict was also entitled to good conduct or loyalty credits, as well as a reduction in sentence for preventive detention, or jail time served prior to conviction, he added.

Gullas said this meant that with exemplary behavior, a "life termer" could qualify to get out of prison after serving less than 15 years.

Under the new proposal, convicts sentenced to "qualified reclusion perpetua" would not get good behavior allowances and a reduction in sentence for preventive detention, he said.

Gullas added that there would also be an "accessory penalty" requiring heinous crime convicts to provide full compensation to their victims or their families.

The proposal is expected to be discussed once the House begins debates on the repeal of the Death Penalty Law when Congress resumes sessions in mid-May.

The anticrime group Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, meanwhile, shifted the battle for the implementation of the Death Penalty Law to the legislative branch after President Macapagal-Arroyo commuted all death sentences.

VACC chair Dante Jimenez said the group's members would meet with lawmakers to convince them not to review or repeal Republic Act No. 7659 or the Death Penalty Law as there were more pressing matters to tackle.

"We will appeal to their conscience that it is not the time to repeal RA 7659. There is no urgency to repeal the law. They can review that some other day," Jimenez said yesterday at the Kapihan sa Manila forum.

He added that the House of Representative should focus on laws that deal with the economy, employment and the oil price increase.

Jimenez also said VACC's lawyers were studying whether or not to hale Ms Arroyo to court for her decision.

Although the President has the power to commute death sentences, he said, this should be done on a case-to-case basis.

"It should not be [done] wholesale. The family of the victim has the right to know how the sentence was commuted," Jimenez said.

Pinoys to attend meet on disabled

A FIVE-MEMBER DELEGATION FROM THE Philippines will attend the VSA arts International Conference in Washington, D.C. on June 9-10. The conference is a gathering of professionals in the arts, education and disability fields. VSA arts International was founded by Jean Kennedy Smith, a sister of President John F. Kennedy, in 1974. It has 80 organization-affiliates worldwide, including VSA arts Philippines Inc.

VSA arts Philippines promotes music, drama, dancing, saori weaving and creative writing, especially among disabled children and adults. It is affiliated with the Kennedy Center in the US capital.

Its executive director Rebecca M. Santos will lead the Philippine delegation with communications coordinator Ofelia Silang, community advocator Rizalinda Sanchez, craft artist Ma. Luisa Paje Luengco and Adelaida B. Reyes from the Department of Education's Special Education Supervision.

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Ombudsman: 56 execs sanctioned

By Nelson F. Flores

GUTIERREZ

TWENTY-THREE ERRING GOVERNMENT officials have been dismissed from the service and 33 others suspended since January last year, for a total of 56 executives sanctioned for corruption, according to Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez.

Gutierrez made the announcement yesterday in reaction to a recent speech by US Ambassador Kristie Kenney before the local American Chamber of Commerce where the envoy asserted that corruption was one of the things hindering economic development in the Philippines.

Role of corruption

Kenney said that while the country's growth rate looked good, "compared to some of the dynamic, fast-moving economies in Asia, the Philippines is not where it ought to be."

"Corruption plays a role in this, as do issues such as intellectual property rights," she had said.

Gutierrez said that among those dismissed from the government service were an internal revenue commissioner, a customs deputy commissioner, a port manager and a public works undersecretary.

50 being prosecuted

In addition, she said, her office was currently prosecuting 50 ranking government personnel, including several military officers, before the Sandiganbayan antigraft court.

"Because of the reforms being implemented at the Office of the Ombudsman, there has been a steady increase in the conviction rate for cases that went to trial, from 13 percent in 2003 to 33 percent in 2005," Gutierrez said.

Ex-health secretary

Ombudsman records showed that among those convicted by the Sandiganbayan in 2005 were a former health secretary, a governor, several mayors and directors of national government offices.

Recent reforms

Among the reforms recently undertaken by the Office of the Ombudsman was the Pursuing Reforms through Integrity Development program, which assesses government agencies' levels of corruption resistance and develops and implements corruption prevention measures. The program is a joint project of the Ombudsman and the Department of Budget and Management.

Gutierrez said the "Office of the Ombudsman is consistent in its commitment to rid the government of corrupt officials by prosecuting those involved in corrupt practices and by initiating reforms to ensure a speedy and fair disposition of cases."

Years in jail 'spiritually enriching,' says Estrada

By Nelson F. Flores

FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA marks today his fifth year in detention while undergoing trial for plunder and perjury in the Sandiganbayan.

In a statement he issued yesterday, Estrada said his five-year incarceration was a "spiritually enriching experience." He said it had taught him how to forgive.

"It was during these five years that I learned what true forgiveness means. I found out that it is when you completely forgive and pray for those who have wronged you that you find spiritual fulfillment," Estrada said.

Estrada admitted he was initially embittered by his ouster and kept asking God why this had to happen to him. He said he found the answers in the Bible and he has been praying since.

"I have been praying for all of them, and always remember to pray for the late cardinal, Jaime Sin, as well as the bishops. I know that through prayers, they who wronged me will be enlightened, as I hope and pray that the Arroyo administration will be enlightened and set the Filipino people free, through the truth that cannot be hidden."

Estrada said he had forgiven those who played a part in his ouster from Malacañang like Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, former Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado, Sen. Manuel Villar, former Quezon Rep. Wigberto Tañada, Senate President Franklin Drilon and former Sen. Loren Legarda.

"I've forgiven them. I am a Christian. I read the Bible three times a week," Estrada said.

Estrada's statement came in the wake of Novaliches Bishop Antonio Tobias's unexpected apology for the role of Church leaders in Edsa II last Wednesday during a Mass to celebrate the former President's 69th birthday.

"I hope you can forgive the Catholic Church for what happened to you," Tobias had said, obviously referring to the major role Sin had played in the 2001 Edsa II revolt that drove Estrada from Malacañang.

"There is no rancor within me. So many who have worked for my removal then have come to visit me, and they know that there is no enmity between them and myself. That is how I know now that the five years in detention have become a sacrifice that I willingly embraced, for my own good and the good of the nation," Estrada said.

Customs digitizes documents as safeguard

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS HAS STARTED to put its documents in "electronic form" to safeguard them from loss in the hands of unscrupulous personnel and the forces of nature—rats, termites, floods—that are often blamed for the destruction or disappearance of records.

Operatives of the bureau's Run After Smugglers (RATS) program came up with the measure in view of the increasing number of smuggling cases dismissed by the Department of Justice and the courts because of the failure of customs officials to produce genuine documents as evidence.

"We are determined to have none of our smuggling cases dismissed on technicality," Customs Commissioner Napoleon L. Morales said at a press briefing after RATS operatives filed their 14th smuggling case last Thursday.

DOJ's Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño complained earlier that many smuggling cases had been dismissed because they were only backed by photocopied evidence, with customs personnel saying that they could not produce the original records because they had been either lost, eaten by termites and rats, or destroyed by floods.

Reynaldo Umali, director of both the customs' legal service and RATS, said they have devised a records management system and are now putting the documents in digital form.

"These are admissible as evidence in court," he said of the digitized form, which carry codes for easy tracking. In addition, the bureau also maintains a "manual record system" to safeguard the original documents.

Armand N. Nocum

Correction

IN THE APRIL 23 ISSUE, a caption on Page A13 misstated the occupation of the person standing beside President Macapagal-Arroyo and Tessa Prieto-Valdes at the Tubbataha Reef Marine Park. Gigi Santos is a dive instructor—not a dive master.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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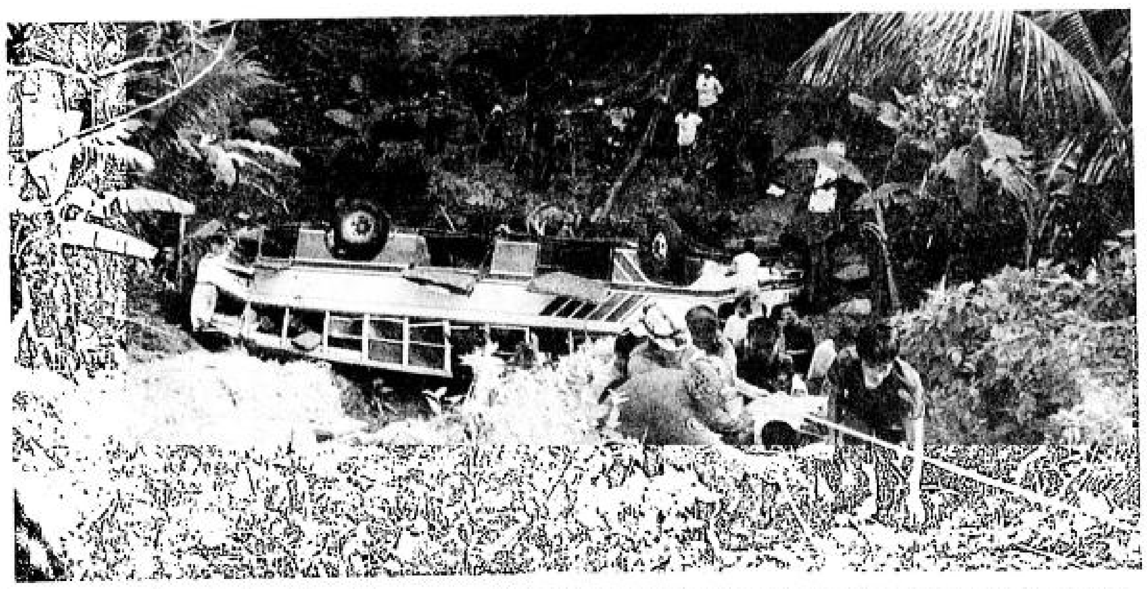
7 killed, over 50 hurt as bus plunges into ravine

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



RESCUE workers haul an injured passenger of the Manila-bound bus up the 30-meter ravine into which it tumbled in Pagbilao, Quezon, early Monday. DELFIN T. MALLARI JR./PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

PAGBILAO, QUEZON—AT LEAST seven people were killed and more than 50 others injured when a speeding Manila-bound bus drove off a sharp curve and plunged into a 30-meter ravine here before dawn yesterday.

"We were traveling downward too fast. The driver probably thought that he was driving on a straight road so when we reached the sharp curve, he could no longer control the bus," said Raquel Alban, 21, a resident of Naga City.

Alban was in the front seat of the RJ Transit bus, which had come from Bicol, when the vehicle fell off the zigzag diversion road of the Maharlika Highway in Sitio Upper Sapinit, Barangay Silangang Malicboy, at around 2:30 a.m. She escaped with only a few bruises.

At least seven persons, apparently including the driver, were killed, and their bodies were taken to Funeraria Pagbilao in Lucena City.

More than 50 injured passengers were rushed to the Jane County Hospital in Pagbilao town.

Supt. Joselito Conti, Pagbilao police chief, identified the fatalities as Eduardo Onan of Rosario, Pasig City; Victor Argones of Tigaon, Camarines Sur; Kaila Marie Argones, 5, and Jovie Enterino, 24.

Conti said passengers had pointed to Argones as the bus driver. It was not immediately clear if he and the girl were related.

Four of the victims were pinned to death by steel bars and iron sheets in the wreckage of the bus as it lay on its left side at the bottom of the ravine.

Rescue groups, police and soldiers lowered several acetylene tanks to the crash site to free the bodies.

Police said the bus was descending the diversion road bypassing the Pagbilao town proper when the driver lost control of the vehicle at the curve. The road had no steel railings.

Alban said she was awake when the accident happened.

"I lost count of how many times the bus tumbled ... as it rolled down the cliff. After it settled below, I only heard painful cries of help from the other passengers," she said, still visibly shaken as she sipped water in a hut nearby.

"I was afraid that the bus would explode, so I rushed to get out of the bus," she said, adding that policemen arrived at the scene a few minutes after she had climbed up to the road.

Conti said police were alerted to the accident by motorists and that he, in turn, called in the rescue team of the Mirant power company which had the necessary equipment.

"I don't know how many times I climbed up and down the cliff to help bring the survivors to safety at the top," said Alex Orig, a member of the rescue team.

Eden de Quirroz, a resident of Lagunoy, said she tightly embraced her young son as the bus plummeted.

"He does not have any bruises, except for a little swollen part on his head. But he's all right. He was saved by his guardian angel," she said, still hugging the boy.

Her husband Andres also suffered minor injuries only, De Quirroz said. They were sitting at the back of the bus.

Jay Barquilla of Tinambak, Camarines Sur, likened the speed of the bus to the Bicol Express.

"It was running very fast. I could barely sleep from nervousness. I was lucky I only suffered these injuries," he said, showing the bruises on different parts of the body.

According to residents of the area, that section of road used to be protected by steel railings but the structure was torn away by numerous accidents in the past.

Air Force chopper crashes; no one hurt

A PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE HELIcopter crash-landed yesterday while on a search and rescue mission in San Ildefonso, Bulacan. The three military personnel on board survived with no apparent injuries.

A PAF spokesperson said the McDonnel Douglas MD-520MG Defender was escorting another helicopter, a UH-1H "Huey," when it plowed into a sparsely vegetated mountain slope in Barangay Alagao at about 12:45 p.m.

The two choppers had taken off from Fort Magsaysay in Laur, Nueva Ecija, on a rescue mission involving a capsized pump boat carrying Army troops, according to Maj. Augusto de la Peña, Air Force assistant director for media.

The PAF was still verifying the cause of the crash. Initial reports indicated the two pilots—Capt. Fernando G. Ventura and 1st Lt. Marvin Santiago—and lone crewman Sgt. Darwin Vintuan escaped injury, De la Peña said.

The incident prompted the grounding of the entire PAF Defender fleet as a matter of standard procedure.

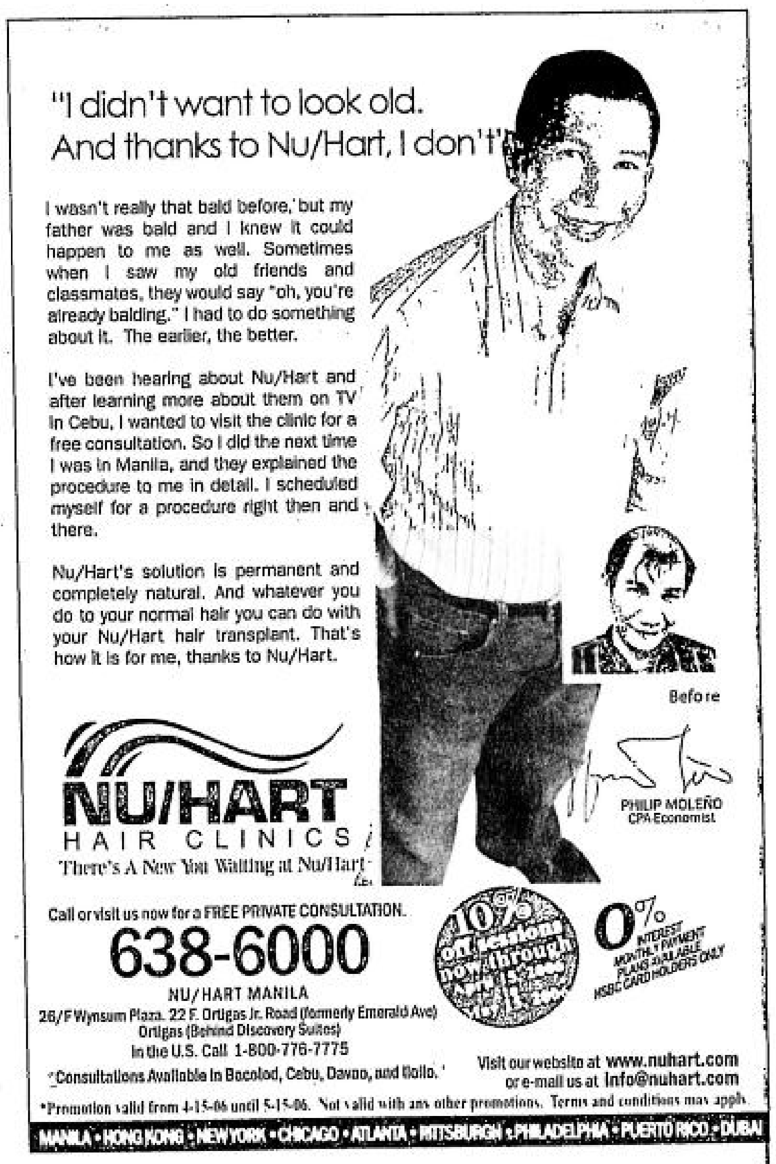
The ill-fated chopper was one of the 24 "brand new" Defenders acquired by the PAF in 1990 under the United States foreign military assistance program, De la Peña said. A versatile aircraft, the Defender cost $1.3 million each at the time, he said.

Until yesterday's mishap, 17 of the 24 units were in operation under the 15th Strike Wing, the major added.

Ambassador to Washington Albert del Rosario, meanwhile, announced that the Philippines currently has 26 helicopters in various stages of refurbishment in the United States. The US is funding the rehabilitation of 20 of the helicopters, he said.

The helicopters were those pledged by US President George W. Bush to the Philippines during his October 2003 state visit where he committed to provide 20 helicopters plus 10 helicopters as spares. The six other helicopters undergoing refurbishment are being paid for under the Armed Forces of the Philippines' modernization fund.

Del Rosario said the Philippines stands to receive 14 fully refurbished helicopters this year with a possible two more for a total of 16 in 2006, with the rest of the helicopters to be delivered in 2007. *Volt Contreras*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Lifting of VAT on oil seen, draws House support

From page A1

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles announced at a press conference yesterday.

"The price of gasoline will become an unreachable star, an impossible dream, if we will not act posthaste," Nograles said.

Oil companies in the country raised by 50 centavos a liter the prices of gasoline, diesel and kerosene over the weekend and are expected to further raise them to reflect the higher cost of crude.

All-time high

Oil prices hit an all-time high of $75.35 a barrel at the New York Mercantile Exchange on Friday after Iran continued to defy world pressure to halt its nuclear program; a quarter of Nigeria's output lay idle after rebel attacks, and Iraq's once considerable oil industry was mired in crisis.

Instead of repealing the VAT law, Nograles proposed a resolution asking Malacañang to suspend the tax.

He said the resolution, which expresses the sense of Congress, would only seek a suspension of Republic Act No. 9337, or the VAT law, so that there would be no need for another law.

"The House can adopt the resolution in plenary session, while the Senate can also do so to fast-track the process," he said.

Congress, which started its Lenten break on April 8, has only 10 days left for its summer session. It will resume session on May 15 and adjourn on June 9.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said the political opposition would readily support Malacañang's proposal.

He pointed out that the minority had long argued that the VAT on petroleum products was burdensome and unnecessary.

"Now if they really want to lift the VAT on oil products, and this move is being initiated by the majority, it can be done," Escudero said.

While the House is receptive to the proposal to exempt fuel from the VAT, the Department of Finance is not.

A finance official said the proposal would result in revenue losses that could derail the government's fiscal reform agenda.

"The reduction of duties we can agree on. The President can simply issue an executive order (to implement the tariff cut)," the finance official told reporters.

The official said the government would lose P2.5 billion for every 1-percentage-point reduction in the tariff, but the amount would be more than offset by the incremental revenue from the increase in oil prices.

FUEL PRICES

Product	Prevailing prices (peso per liter)*
Premium unleaded gasoline	37.79-39.26
Unleaded gasoline	37.15-38.53
Diesel	32.79-34.42
Kerosene	35.60-38.00
LPG (11-kg cylinder)	408.87-473.84

*EXCEPT LPG

For every $1 increase in the price of crude oil, the government collects P1 billion in additional revenue from the tariff, according to the official.

But the official said it would be difficult to recover from other sources the P29 billion in foregone revenue from the lifting of the VAT on fuel.

Cut spending

Should the proposal to lift the VAT on oil be pursued, the government should restrict its spending so it could keep its fiscal target of reducing the budget deficit to zero by 2008.

"To keep its deficit neutral, government should postpone the P13-billion expenditure for Executive Order No. 366, or the government rationalization program," said Salceda, who has the President's ear on economic matters.

In September last year, Salceda, chair of the House economic affairs and appropriations committee, asked the President to certify as urgent a resolution he filed to defer the VAT on oil until global prices stabilized at $65 per barrel.

In a statement, Sen. Ralph Recto said he had no objection to "Malacañang signals that it can live without the new VAT."

"If it thinks that the VAT as a bitter fiscal medicine is no longer needed, that the patient is hale and hearty, and can be unplugged from the VAT life support system, then nobody would be happier than an institution which grudgingly acceded to such a tax," said Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee.

But Malacañang should be prepared to "give up the higher spending VAT has given it, for after all it is the one who enjoys disbursing it," he said.

"Aside from the budgetary impact, it must also assess what a VAT retraction would do to the country's debt and deficit reduction plan, and to our interest and foreign exchange rates. Our creditors will hyperventilate and panic and we should be ready to calm them," he said.

Defensor acknowledged that the biggest issue in suspending the tax and tariff on oil was the impact on the fiscal picture.

Ms Arroyo lobbied for the imposition of VAT on oil in 2005, specifically to cure the country's chronic budget deficit problem.

"I think we really need a joint resolution from Congress to effect the tax exemption on oil," Defensor said.

Other options

He said the government was also considering other options to address the rising oil prices such as buying supplies from non-members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) like Russia.

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OIL DEREG.
SOBRANG PARUSA
NA SA MASA!
- MAKA

AN ACTIVIST protests the series of oil price increases in front of the Petron office in Makati. EDWIN BACASMAS

"We have to look at all the options and then explain to the public why we are doing this and why we are not doing this," Defensor said.

But he said Malacañang would reject any proposal to regulate the oil industry and to subsidize fuel prices. "The effect of these measures will still be the same so we have to be careful because our budget deficit is also a primary concern for us." *With a report from Abigail Ho*

Batasan 5 await Supreme Court decision on DOJ jurisdiction

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE BATASAN 5 YESTERDAY asked the Makati Regional Trial Court to suspend proceedings on rebellion charges against them in deference to the Supreme Court.

At a press conference, the lawmakers said the court proceedings could not continue until the high court had ruled on their pending petition questioning the jurisdiction and impartiality of the Department of Justice in its conduct of the preliminary investigation.

They also asked the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 137 to hold a hearing on April 28 to determine the existence of a probable cause against them, a process respondents in a criminal case could resort to ahead of a formal trial.

But if all legal maneuvers fail, the militant lawmakers indicated they would not resist arrest.

Won't resist arrest

"We can't resist arrest," said party-list Rep. Teodoro Casiño of Bayan Muna.

Rep. Satur Ocampo, also of Bayan Muna, expected police to "bodily carry us out" of the Batasan complex as part of their "grand conspiracy to kick us out of Congress."

However, Rep. Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis said he and his colleagues would still question the irregular issuance of warrants "in the proper forum."

'Fabulous, incredible'

Ocampo, Casiño and Mariano are among five militant lawmakers who have been given protective custody by the House of Representatives to prevent them from being arrested before any formal charges against them had been filed.

All five viewed the DOJ decision to include them in the rebellion case lodged earlier against Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran as "posthaste, illegal and biased."

Casiño said the amended information was "so fabulous and incredible it would pass as an excellent telenovela of epic proportions" and a "perfect example of persecution by political association."

He pointed out that the DOJ resolution alleged that he and the party-list lawmakers, along with other militant leaders, conspired to commit armed rebellion from 1969 to 2006.

Among the crimes mentioned was the Plaza Miranda bombing in Manila in 1970.

"What would I know about the Plaza Miranda bombing?" said a startled Casiño, who said he was only 2 years old when grenades exploded during a Liberal Party rally at the plaza, killing several people.

The hand of GMA

"Using the DOJ's logic, then everyone who was associated with the Left in the past three decades should be charged with rebellion. This includes (presidential advisers) Mike Defensor, Bobi Tiglao and the President herself, who once admitted harboring wounded New People's Army in her house," said Casiño.

"The DOJ merely fulfilled the task given them by Ms Arroyo to silence and persecute us, and facilitate our arrest and detention," said Gabriela party-list Rep. Liza Maza.

Ocampo said: "Beyond the DOJ, we believe it's President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her cabal of advisers on national security who are behind this maneuver."

6 solons, Gringo charged with rebellion

From page A1

condemn as a violation of our right to due process of law the posthaste and indecent filing by the Department of Justice ... of (the case) against the progressive party-list representatives in Congress," Ocampo said.

Ocampo, along with Casiño, Mariano, Maza and Virador, has been under protective House custody for weeks. *(See related story on Page A6)*.

Before the filing of the charges, government people had been releasing videos and documents to media to support the administration claim of the existence of conspiracies against Ms Arroyo. Some of those named in the documents had described the evidence as fabrications.

A hundred days

The DOJ prosecutors filed the charges before Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Jenny Lind Aldecoa-Delorino. They recommended no bail.

Others charged included former military officials Jake Malajacan and Felix Turingan, Magdalo soldiers First Lieutenants Angelbert Gay, Patricio Bumindang and Lawrence San Juan, and 2nd Lt. Aldrin Baldonado, and Sison's wife Juliet.

"After a careful evaluation of the evidence on record, we find probable cause to charge respondents for the crime of rebellion," the DOJ panel said in its resolution.

In an amended complaint, the justice department said the Communist Party of the Philippines and its affiliates were involved in a 100-day campaign to oust Ms Arroyo that would have culminated on May 1 this year.

Legal fronts

The justice department said the plot called for street protests in Metro Manila, after which members of the New People's Army and the rightist group Malayang Kawal ng Pilipino (MKP) would supposedly join hands to attack Malacañang.

It alleged that the party-list groups of the six lawmakers were "legal fronts" of the CPP.

"The decision to launch (the) rebellion was conceptualized and agreed upon (and continued to be reaffirmed and carried out) by the Central Committee of the CPP, whose members include the organizations headed by Beltran, Ocampo, Virador, Mariano ... and Maza," among others, the justice department said in its resolution.

It also said: "Respondents, through their respective organizations, the CPP/NPA/NDF and MKP decided to join forces to carry out their objective of overthrowing the duly constituted government."

Coups and assassinations

The justice department claimed this information was obtained from flash drives and diskettes recovered from Lieutenant San Juan.

It also said the transcripts from the flash drives showed what the organizations had accomplished and courses of action to grab power and install a transitional council.

"The unified action of respondents, such as ambuscades, assassinations, coup plots and other atrocities, undeniably show an intricate web of conspiratorial acts of armed rebellion," the resolution said.

"The atrocities mentioned did not happen by accident, or by coincidence: They were deliberate and orchestrated for a common political objective—the seizure of political power."

The justice department pointed out that several witnesses had identified the accused as "performing rebellious acts" against the government.

"Well-settled is the rule that positive identification of an accused by a credible witness as the perpetrator of the crime demolishes alibi, the much abused sanctuary of felons," it said.

Judges has last word

The justice department panel, led by State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, also recommended that further investigation of Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim of the Scout Rangers, Lt. Senior Grade Antonio Trillanes IV, Albert de Mesa Guyal, Edwin Alcid and Rafael Galvez to determine their role in the alleged conspiracy.

The information actually amended an earlier rebellion case it had filed against Beltran and San Juan.

Judge Aldecoa-Delorino said that in line with procedure, the court would not automatically admit the amended information.

"The respondents will be given a chance to comment on the motion to admit the amended information. Then we shall set it for hearing," she told the INQUIRER. "The amended information is not automatically admitted."

Arrest warrants

The issuance of arrest warrants against the new accused would depend upon the court's ruling on the expected opposing comments from the defendants and corresponding replies of the prosecution panel.

Romeo Capulong, lawyer for the accused sectoral representatives, said his team would file a motion asking the court to strike out the amended information "on very valid grounds."

He also expressed confidence that the court would not issue arrest warrants any time soon.

In a related move, Aldecoa-Delorino granted the wish of the ailing Beltran to be transferred from the Philippine National Police General Hospital to the Philippine Heart Center, where he preferred to have his medical treatment. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

THE BELEAGUERED party-list lawmakers—Rafael Mariano, Joel Virador, Satur Ocampo, Liza Maza, Crispin Beltran and Teodoro Casiño—are shown in this photo taken in January as they rejected a no-election scenario. PDI PHOTO

List of Respondents

Rep. Crispin Beltran
1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan
Jose Ma. Sison@Joma/Amado
Guerror/Armando Liwanag
Juliet Sison
Luis Jalandoni
Gregorio Rosal @ Ka Roger
Tirso Alcantara @ Ka Bart
Benjamin Mendoza @ Ivan
Benito Tiamzon @ Celio
Gregorio Honasan @ Doc
Jake Malajacan
Felix Turingan
1st Lt. Angelbert Gay
at Lt. Patricio Bumindang
2nd Lt. Aldrin Baldonado
Atty. Christopher Belmonte
Rep. Rafael Mariano
Rep. Saturnino Ocampo
Rep. Teodoro Casiño
Rep. Joel Virador
Rep. Liza Maza
Vicente Ladlad
Nathaniel Santiago
Sotero Llams @ Nognog
Julio Atienza @ Kulas/Donato/Adan
Edilberto Escudero @ Egay
Rosemarie Domanais @ Insa/Upeng
Rogelio Villanueva @ Makling
Leo Velasco
Rafael Baylosis
Prudencio Calubid
Philip Limjoco
Julius Giron
Allan Jasminez
Antonio Cabanatan
Fidel Agcaoili
Edilberto Silva
Maria Concepcion Araneta Bocala
Jorge Madlos
Eugenia Topacio
Francisco Fernandez
Carlos Borjal
Elizabeth Principe
Randal Echaniz
Rey Claro Casandre
Edwin Alcid
Tita Lubi
several other John/Jane Does

SC urged to halt Aussie mine project

By Blanche S. Rivera

AN ANTIMINING group composed of indigenous people has asked the Supreme Court to reconsider its decision allowing an Australian mining company to proceed with the $117-million Didipio gold-copper mining project in two provinces in Luzon.

The Didipio Earth-Savers Multi-Purpose Association Inc. (Desama) filed a motion for reconsideration with the Supreme Court yesterday in a last-ditch attempt to save 37,000 hectares of agricultural land from large-scale mining operations.

Last chance

The Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC), which has questioned the constitutionality of the Mining Act of 1995 in two cases including Desama's, said the motion was the last chance to raise policy questions on the Mining Act. The LRC is a nongovernment organization that focuses on the enforcement of environmental legislation and acts as Desama's counsel in the case before the Supreme Court.

"This is probably the last pleading that we will file on the case," LRC's Melizel Asuncion said at a press conference yesterday. "There is a limit to the pleadings we can file on a case. It has to stop somewhere and we recognize that."

Families divided

"No matter how the court decides, the reality is that there is a struggle on the ground. Families are being divided and nobody is getting rich because of mining," she said.

The Supreme Court ruled on March 30 that Climax-Arimco Mining Corp.'s financial or technical assistance agreement with the government was constitutional, removing all legal barriers to its operations.

The company, which is 99 percent Australian-owned, executed the agreement with the Ramos administration in June 1994 covering 37,000 hectares in Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino.

Legal hurdles

The company secured a permit to mine 23.8-million tons of gold and copper for 15 years from the Didipio project. It estimates that the project site has a potential of 121 million tons of minerals.

The company, now named Australasian Philippines Mining Inc., however, has yet to operate due to legal hurdles initiated by antimining groups.

"We are still hopeful that the truth about the state of our barangay would come out, that the court will see what is really happening in the area," Peter Duyapat, a kagawad of Dididpio, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya, said in Filipino.

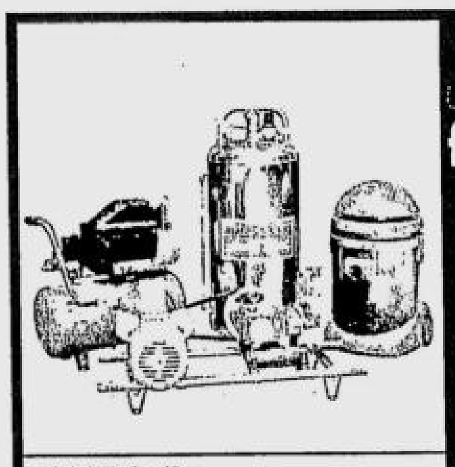
In its 20-page motion, Desama said that only the state had the power of eminent domain which would enable it to acquire a private property upon just compensation. The Mining Act, however, does not provide for the determination of just compensation.

"The law is clear. Only private entities that operate public utilities work as exception to the rule barring further delegation of an already delegated power," Desama said in its motion.

"Any taking that does not comply with these constitutional restrictions is unlawful. And any law allowing for this unlawful exercise must be struck down for its patent unconstitutionality," the group said.

Duyapat said less than half of Barangay Didipio's 1,700 residents were promining. Most of these promining groups have already sold their lands to the mining company.

With Alda Franz Quodala



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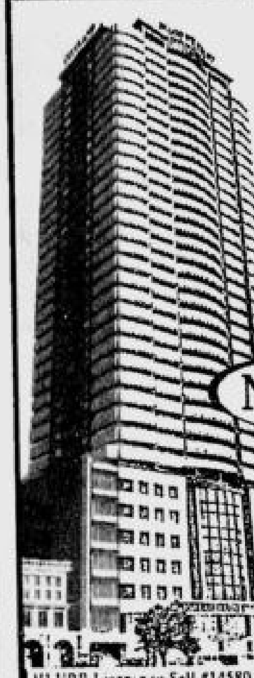

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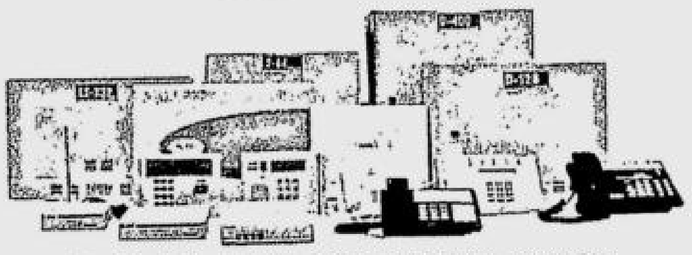

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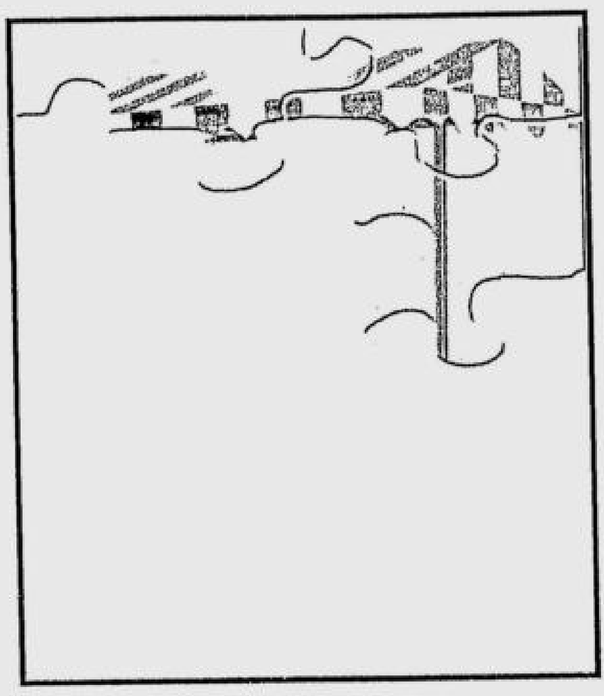

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Top DepEd exec fires parting shot at GMA

From page A1

which criticized the administration for having a "low regard" for the "professionalism of the civil service and the career executive service corps."

Luz is an older brother of Executive Director Guillermo "Bill" Luz of the Makati Business Club, some of whose leaders last year called for the resignation of Ms Arroyo in the wake of the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal.

In his letter, Mike Luz said that "little value is placed on genuine education reforms by this administration."

"My greatest regret now is that the education reforms we have worked hard to put in place may not survive this administration's preoccupation with political expediency rather than genuine reform, with deal-making rather than development, as well as the lack of appreciation much less commitment to the rule of law and good governance," the former education official said.

Malacañang shrugged off Luz's criticism.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said these were just Luz's "opinions, especially (as) he is adversely affected by the order for him to be relieved" from his education post.

"He may have said that because he felt bad," Ermita told reporters.

Not the only one

Ermita also said that if the media would ask other officials at the DepEd, he was certain they would tell them that it was not only Luz who could pursue such reforms.

Luz said his experience showed "a low level of trust in the Department of Education as contributing to the development of this country as a nation."

In September last year, Malacañang fired Luz, then education undersecretary for finance and administration, after he refused to accept postdated checks from the President's Social Fund made out to the department but intended for Rep. Antonio Diaz of Zambales.

Diaz was among the congressmen who voted to dismiss an impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo last year.

Luz had said that honoring the postdated checks would be in violation of government accounting rules and regulations.

He was then ordered transferred to the labor department.

He appealed to the Civil Service Commission, saying he could not be transferred summarily by the Palace since he was a career executive service officer and could be dismissed only for cause. He lost the appeal.

In his resignation letter, Luz said the Palace had shown a "high disregard for government accounting rules and regulations with civil servants expected to follow instructions in the face of this disregard for law at their peril."

"I have indicated publicly that I have no desire to be reassigned at the 'President's pleasure' to some other agency 'for the exigency of the service'—two of the misused concepts in the vocabulary of the Office of the President," Luz said.

No quick fixes

He said that in the last three years, a lot had been done to put in place education reforms as part of the changes started during the term of Secretary Edilberto de Jesus and carried out into the term of Florencio "Butch" Abad.

"Public education is a sector where there are no quick fixes," Luz stressed.

"It takes 10 years to educate a child in basic education ... There is no room for quick-fix solutions with dubious value-added to the public school system (e.g., Strong Republic Schools, rice distribution rather than in-school feeding programs and the like). What is needed is steady, continuous and committed investment based on a clear and focused education agenda."

Luz also said that since the start of the Arroyo administration, the department had not been rocked by any procurement scandals, save for inaccuracies found in one textbook that was procured a long time ago.

He attributed this to the work put in by DepEd officials to erase the image of the department as a corrupt government agency.

"Since 2002, education reforms, both in terms of financial management and support to the academic programs of schools and school division, have helped establish the DepEd as one of the five cleanest (least corrupt) national agencies in the Social Weather Stations annual survey," adding:

"This has been cause for great pride in the DepEd considering that ours was once listed as one of the five most corrupt agencies in the same survey prior to 2002."

In a separate letter to DepEd officer in charge Fe Hidalgo, Luz said he was tendering his resignation effective April 21 and urged her to continue the reforms in education.

He told reporters in a text message that he was taking on the presidency of an international non-government organization. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

PCSO *TODAY*

Grassroots charity

STL to generate P7.2 billion in first year

THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) announced that the small-town lottery (STL) is projected to generate some P7.2 billion on its first year of operation.

The STL, just like the sweepstakes and lotto games of the PCSO, will also generate funds for the agency's Charity Fund, which is the source of funding for PCSO's medical assistance to indigents.

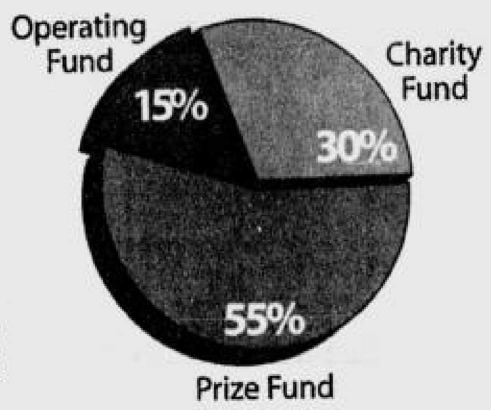
Of the net revenue generated by PCSO (less government taxes and agents' fees), a fixed 30 percent goes to the Charity Fund, 55 percent to the prize fund, and 15 percent to the operating fund.

Under the STL scheme, the agency is proposing to share the charity fund that will be generated by STL to the local government as well as the local Philippine National Police (PNP).

About 10 percent of the charity fund from STL will go to the city or municipality where the numbers game operates, while five percent will go to the provincial government.

Also, the proposal seeks to give 2.5 percent to the congressional district of the area where the STL is held and five percent to the local PNP.

"The proceeds of STL will directly reach the local government units. It will go to the municipal treasurer's office. We did this to effectively decentralize the use of charity funds. PCSO intends to execute a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with local government units on how to disburse the funds given to them via STL," said Lauro Patiag, Legal Department Head of PCSO.



The rest of the charity fund will go to PCSO.

PCSO directly benefits indigent Filipinos nationwide through charitable programs such as the Individual Medical Assistance Program, institutional charity programs, medical missions nationwide and special health programs in collaboration with other government agencies, among others.

Aside from its existing medical assistance programs, PCSO also contributes to the coffers of the national government as mandated by various laws.

R.A. 7722 mandates that one percent of PCSO's gross sales is allotted to the Commission on Higher Education, while R.A. 8136 states that 10 percent of the net earnings of the agency is given to the Crop Insurance Program of the government.

PCSO also contributes to the government's National Shelter Program.

With STL, more funds will be raised to augment sales revenues from existing games of the PCSO, which also means more funds for the charity program.

This is particularly important for PCSO as the demands for more medical aid and charity programs have steadily increased during the last several years.

Dr. Larry Cedro, Assistant Department Manager of the PCSO Charity Clinic, had earlier said in a press conference that in 2005, the demand for medical assistance increased by about 32 percent.

"For 2005, we had an increase of about 32 percent. *Tumaas talaga ang* demand for services. This is especially true for chemotherapy requests from cancer patients and dialysis treatments for those with renal ailments. We also expanded our services like the ambulance donation program. So, for us to realize these programs, we need to generate more funds. *Kaya may* STL," he said.

"*Pag bisita ninyo sa aming tanggapan, ang daming pumipila.* And in order to extend assistance to these people, we need more funds," Cedro added.

He also said that aside from fund generation, the implementation of the STL is also seen to generate employment and livelihood to thousands of Filipinos displaced by the campaign against jueteng.

STL is legal

THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) is mandated to conduct lotteries nationwide, including the small-town lottery (STL), based on Republic Act 1169, an enabling law of the charity agency.

Section 1 of the statute expressly authorizes PCSO to hold and conduct lotteries and other similar activities in such frequency and manner in accordance with the rules and regulations determined by its Board of Directors.

According to PCSO, STL is a form of lottery and there is no dispute that the charity agency can implement the numbers game.

PCSO cited a Supreme Court decision indicating the charter of the agency does not prohibit it from holding or conducting lottery in collaboration, association or joint venture with other parties.

The Court's decision empowered PCSO to enter into a contract for the holding of the lottery with another party so long as the agency itself holds or conducts such lottery.

Also, an opinion of the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) in 2005 declared that the scheme by which the test runs for the STLs will be implemented appeared to be legally feasible, provided it's conducted in the same way PCSO operates its sweepstakes and lotto games.

LGU and PNP can 'make or break' STL

THE SUCCESS of the small-town lottery (STL) project of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) depends on the support of local government units (LGUs) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), according to proponents of the numbers game.

In separate media interviews, anti-illegal gambling czar Edward Hagedorn and PCSO legal department head Lauro Patiag both said the STL will only be operated in areas where it will be welcomed by respective LGU authorities.

Hagedorn, also Puerto Princesa City mayor, said the STL is being revived due to the clamor of LGU executives, particularly city and municipal mayors, for an alternative livelihood for the thousands of individuals displaced by the government's successful drive against the illegal numbers game jueteng.

He said the STL may be implemented in areas where jueteng was once prevalent, subject to the approval of the LGU concerned.

Patiag agreed and said the STL will only be operated in areas where the respective provincial, city or municipal councils passed resolutions in support of the numbers game.

He added that the PNP's cooperation in the effort to implement STL is also crucial in preventing illegal gambling lords from using the game to run parallel operations of jueteng.

"PCSO believes the STL will succeed if there is real support from the respective local government unit and the police," he said.

According to the PCSO, the idea to revive the STL also cropped up during a hearing of the House Committee on Public Order and Security on jueteng in June last year. At the panel hearing, the possibility of implementing a program that will address the plight of displaced jueteng *cabos* and *cobradores* was discussed.

Also, members of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) from Region I to Region V, as well as the Cordillera Autonomous Region, endorsed a resolution stating their approval of STL as an option, in response to President Arroyo's call to eradicate jueteng. The resolution was addressed to PCSO.

After several meetings and discussions among officials of PCSO, the Office of the President, and the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel on the legality of the STL, the PCSO board of directors approved a resolution calling for a test run of the game.

PCSO Board Resolution No. 464, dated Dec. 28, 2005, effected the approval of the rules and regulations governing the conduct of STL in various pilot areas in Luzon.

In February, the STL was run in pilot test areas in Quezon province, Pampanga, Bataan and Quezon City.

In late March, the National Police Commission, in coordination with PCSO, released guidelines for STL operations to policemen.

Under the guidelines, police cannot arrest anybody authorized by the PCSO to operate the STL except if there are complaints from the PCSO, local government officials, religious groups, and non-government organizations. Arrests can also be conducted when operators violate Republic Act 9287 or the Anti-Illegal Gambling Act.

How to be an STL agent

THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) has several guidelines in determining the acceptability of agent corporations for the test run of small-town lottery (STL).

The agency however clarified that it is not an STL franchise that is being offered to private corporations.

The PCSO said what is awarded to agent corporations is not a contract to operate but an agency agreement similar to what the agency gives to lotto agents.

The most important requirement for the operation of the STL in an area is the endorsement of the local government council.

Corporations applying for STL experimental run need to submit the following:

1. Duly accomplished application form signed by the corporation applicant's president or general manager with the corresponding board resolution of his/her authority stating therein the area applied for;
2. Articles of Incorporation and by-laws duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission showing the corporation possesses the following qualifications:
   a. It must be duly organized for the purpose of conducting marketing and other allied services,

Continued on next page

AUTHORIZED CORPORATIONS FOR STL TEST RUN (as of April 2006)

	COMPANY	Principal Office Address	Area of Operation	Coverage	Status of Operation
1	Lake Tahoe Gaming & Amusement Corporation	Centerpoint Bldg., Kalayaan St., Lourdes Northwest, Angeles City, Pampanga	Angeles City	Citywide	Continuing
2	Suncove Corporation	Landmark Bldg., Kalayaan Village, Quebiawan, San Fernando City, Pampanga	Province of Pampanga	20 municipalities; 1 city	For launching
3	Sunset Bay Research and Marketing Corporation	RBM Bldg., Sta. Rosa, Pilar, Bataan	Province of Bataan	11 municipalities; 1 city	Continuing
4	Pirouette Corporation	29 Enverga cor Osmeña Sts. Lucena City, Quezon	Province of Quezon	40 municipalities; 1 City	Continuing
5	Royal Viva Research	2267 Mabini St., Brgy. Pag-asa, San Jose, Occ. Mindoro	Occidental Mindoro	Province-wide	Continuing
6	Benchmark Acquisition International Corporation	Unit 109, Prima Vianes Bldg. 16 [illegible] Avenue cor. Magalang St. QC	Quezon City, Metro Manila	Citywide	Suspended
7	Ramiold Corporation	Planters Bank Building, Rizal Ave., San Pablo City, Laguna	Province of Laguna	Province-wide	Continuing

Advt

UP chancellor ...

From page A1

grees and 69 doctoral degrees. Twelve of them graduated summa cum laude; 125, magna cum laude, and 198, cum laude.

Country needs all help

In his opening remarks, Cao said the Philippines needed all the help it could get, as it was reeling from one disaster after another—from the "Wowowee" stampede to the Guinsaugon landslide.

The "Wowowee" stampede on Feb. 4 killed 71 fans of the popular TV game show, many of them old women who had camped out in front of the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City for days, along with thousands of poor people, in the hope of winning prizes.

The Guinsaugon landslide buried a whole village in St. Bernard town in Southern Leyte on Feb. 17, killing 152 people. More than 900 others were missing.

Serve own people

It is during crises like these that a UP education can help, Cao said.

"You are scholars of the nation who are supposed to serve your people, not to serve another country," he said, eliciting cheers from the huge crowd of graduates, parents and well-wishers.

Now that they were no longer students but alumni of the state university, the graduates should begin "repaying" the people, whose taxes subsidized their education and made them true "Iskolar ng Bayan" (Scholars of the People), he said.

The chancellor said the payback should be similar to the government's "study now, pay later" program, but its beneficiaries would be ordinary Filipinos.

Cao compared the graduating class to grain—planted, watered and harvested lovingly—the fruit of the teachers' hard work.

"Do better than us, your teachers, in coming up with the solutions to all the world's problems," he said.

Role in nation-building

Donald Ngwe, a Bachelor of Science in Economics graduate who delivered the response on behalf of the graduating class, said the hallmark of a UP education, or "*tatak* UP," was the desire to rid society of its sickness and to learn fundamental truths "in different ways, in different fields."

Each graduate, according to Ngwe, has his or her role in nation-building: Musicians in creating masterpieces, journalists in reporting the truth, teachers in guiding the next generation, engineers in building infrastructure in the community, and businessmen, government workers and economists in implementing policies for the common good.

"Our generation is called upon to face the problems confronting our nation. Let us use our strength and wit to enrich our land, instead of leaving our shores for better opportunities abroad," he said.

Acts of good citizenship

Ngwe said the graduates could help move the country forward through acts of good citizenship, such as paying one's taxes and obeying the law.

Guest of honor was Edgardo Gomez, a professor emeritus, world-renowned marine biologist and founding director of the UP Marine Science Institute (MSI).

Gomez discussed the beginnings of MSI, and how it became the country's foremost research institution for marine biology and chemistry, physical oceanography, among other disciplines.

He stressed the importance of service: "Serve others well before you serve yourself, and the man upstairs ... will look after you."

Lightning rally

As part of tradition, a lightning rally was staged just before the graduates sang "UP Naming Mahal (UP Beloved)" toward the end of the rites.

A small group of militant students suddenly appeared in front of the stage and began shouting slogans against President Macapagal-Arroyo and demanding justice for murdered activists.

Some of the graduates joined the protesters, who unfurled protest banners and streamers.

Facing the crowd, the militants raised their fists and sang along to the dying strains of their alma mater's song.

Ex-beauty queen Chat Silayan dies; 46

From page A1

ter in Quezon City, according to her mother Antonietta Rivera.

The daughter of the late actor Vic Silayan, Chat is survived by her husband Mike Bailon and children Victor Anthony, Timothy and Michaela.

Her remains lie at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati City. Interment is set for Saturday at the Manila Memorial Park in Sucat, Parañaque City.

"Chat died in her sleep," her mother said. "She didn't seem to be in pain. Mike had told me the night before that Chat wanted to see me. When I arrived the next day at 4:30 p.m., she was asleep. I thought of waking her up but changed my mind because I decided it was better for her to rest. Now I wish I did wake her up—at least she'd have known that I was around."

Another picture

Silayan's friend, singer Kuh Ledesma, saw another picture.

"I know for a fact that she suffered a lot because of the cancer," Ledesma recalled. "But she was very courageous because she was certain that she would go to heaven."

The last time she saw Silayan, the singer said, was six months ago. "At the time, I had heard she was already in a bad way, but there she was at the mall with her family ... I think they were going to see a movie."

Rivera said her daughter had started feeling pains in the abdomen and lower back two years ago, but that the actress, a health buff, had brushed off those symptoms, saying they were probably just the result of a rigid exercise regimen.

Finally, Rivera recounted, Silayan was alarmed when she passed blood in her urine and stool. She went for a checkup then, the mother said.

Her daughter had insisted that discussions about her illness be kept to a minimum, Rivera added.

"Michael was her faithful companion throughout this battle," she said. "Even while we accepted that death came to everyone sooner or later, we were all hoping for a miracle for Chat."

Inevitable

Silayan's colleague, Angeli Pangilinan-Valenciano, shared Rivera's sentiment: "We never considered death as an inevitability for Chat. She was a good person. Whenever we saw each other, we always talked about healing."

For the past seven years, Silayan's show biz career had been handled by Valenciano's talent management company, Manila Genesis Entertainment.

Silayan also belonged to the New Life Christian Fellowship in Alabang, Muntinlupa.

"I will miss our prayer time together," said Valenciano.

Within an hour of Silayan's passing, her friend and fellow beauty queen Desiree Verdadero had sent text messages breaking the news to all interested parties, including the media.

Salud himself said he found out about Silayan's passing from 1979 Binibining Pilipinas Universe Dang Cecilio.

"Chat and I started our [separate] careers together. If it were not for her, Dang, Melanie (Marquez) and the other girls [I helped dress up as beauty queens], I wouldn't be where I am now," he added.

"I will always remember Chat as the one who made the *serpentina* famous [again]."

Final exit

Silayan had worn Salud's creation, a light blue *serpentina* (tight-fitting *terno* that flares dramatically at the knees) for the 1980 Miss Universe competition in Seoul, South Korea.

Now for this, her final exit, Silayan is wearing another Salud creation—an ecru gown made from piña fabric, with an embroidered collar and long sleeves with ruffles.

He explained: "Chat was always a big lover of Filipiniana. I am at once glad and sad that her last outfit was something I had made."

Silayan was also a registered nutritionist-dietitian with a degree from the Philippine Women's University. She passed the board exams in 1979.

Movie career

In the movies, she was last seen in Star Cinema's "My First Romance" (2003). Until recently, she cohosted with Dulce and Peter Kairuz the weekly show "700 Club Asia," which reports and dramatizes modern "miracles."

Her other films included "Kung Ako Na Lang Sana" (2003), "Esperanza: The Movie" (1999), "Ipaglaban Mo: The Movie Part 2" (1997) and "Dyesebel" (1990).

Along with other Born Again Christians like Ledesma and Coney Reyes, Silayan had taken an active part in the presidential campaign of Bro. Eddie Villanueva—founding director of the Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide—in 2004.

Junior Inquirer Unicef Hall of Fame awardee

From page A1

child," which was published on Aug. 19-25, 2005, in Balikas in Oriental Mindoro.

In accepting the award, INQUIRER publisher Isagani Yambot said: "I would like to believe that the INQUIRER is a child-friendly paper because its editors and reporters have retained their sense of child-like wonder. They can see things through the fresh eyes of a child."

"We give a lot of attention to children. We try to direct their energies and inquisitiveness toward beneficial and productive paths. We devote many stories to them, we try to present them always in a positive light," said Yambot. "A part of our Manual of Editorial Policies deals with the treatment of photos and stories involving children."

Colin Davis of the Unicef said of the winners: "Let us recognize those journalists and editors who shine above the rest—remaining undaunted by the 'complications' of reporting about children, and doing so with compassion, sharp analysis and outstanding journalistic skills."

Davis said the Unicef had commissioned the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication and the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility to make a study on how the Philippine media had been covering children's issues and concerns.

Their findings were "disturbing," he said. They found out that there were still irresponsible journalists out there who revealed the identities of victims of child abuse or those who were in conflict with the law. Sometimes "judgmental words" were used to describe them.

Junior Inquirer is published every Saturday and is directly distributed for free to its 109 partner schools in Metro Manila. It contains regular sections like World Scope, Journal Pages, For and by kids, Kids'r'rrific and Out There.

It has 14 correspondents from the grade school level called the JI Snoops. This is one of the many ways that the Junior Inquirer ensures that it remains close to the heart of its readers—the children.

Other awardees were:

Mylah Reyes Roque, Outstanding Story on Children, for "The forgotten children," published on April 11, 2005 in Newsbreak Magazine;

Yolly S. Fuertes, Outstanding Story on Children, for "Special kids get special hope," published on May 15, 2005 in The Pangasinan Star;

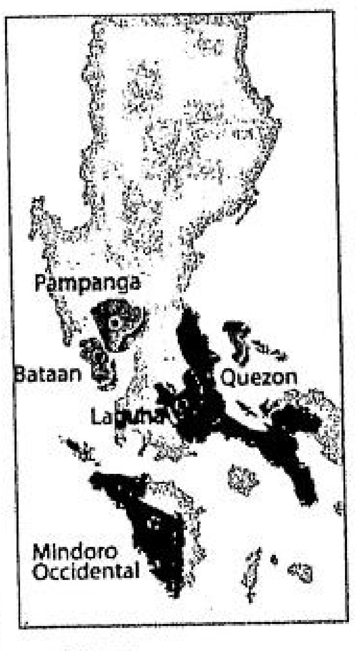
Joanne Ang, Outstanding Child Writer, of the Southern Leyte Times.

Mindanao Times (community daily category) and Baguio Midland Courier (community weekly category) also received Child-Friendly Newspaper of the Year awards.

Special recognition was given to Health Today for being a Child-Friendly Magazine.

STL on test run in 5 Luzon areas

THE SMALL-TOWN lottery (STL) is now currently in its test run in four areas in Luzon to find out if it is viable for the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) to implement the numbers game in full swing.



Lauro Patiag, head of PCSO's legal department, said the test run is now being implemented in Angeles, Pampanga; Quezon province, Bataan, and Mindoro Occidental.

Patiag bared the STL was launched in mid-February on an "experimental" basis to determine its acceptability as an alternative to the illegal numbers game jueteng.

He added the STL is being pilot tested to gauge whether the public will patronize the game and whether it would bring more revenue to the government.

Patiag said the PCSO is also trying to find out if the STL will provide livelihood to those displaced by the campaign to eradicate jueteng.

To determine STL's public acceptability, Patiag noted that in December of last year, the PCSO ran an advertisement inviting interested private corporations to submit applications to become STL agents for a period of one year.

Patiag said although the PCSO executed contracts with private corporations for the test runs of STL, the agency's board of directors can always pull the plug on STL if it makes a determination that the venture is not viable.

"Considering that this is on experimental basis, if it is shown later on that this is not feasible then PCSO will exercise its options under the agreement to pre-terminate if so warranted," he said.

Other than the five areas now in operation, the PCSO said it is also launching STL in other areas in Luzon that volunteered to become pilot areas through provincial, city and municipal council resolutions.

According to PCSO records, around 50 private corporations applied to be STL agents. Of these, seven have already been authorized by PCSO. They include: Pirouette Corp. (Lucena, Quezon), headed by Francis Gonzales; Lake Tahoe Gaming and Amusement Corp. (Angeles City) headed by Damian Ramos, President; Benchmark Acquisition International Corp. (Quezon City) owned by a group of "balikbayan" businessmen; Sunset Bay Research and Marketing Corp. (Bataan); Royal Viva Research Corp. (San Jose City, Mindoro Occidental); Suncove Corp. (San Fernando, Bataan) and Ramlold Corp. (San Pablo City, Laguna).

How to be an STL agent

Continued from last page

b. It must have a local office accessible to the public within each province, chartered city and/ or legislative district designated for actual test runs.

c. It must be 100 percent owned by Filipino citizens.

d. It must have a minimum authorized capital stock of P20 million and with a minimum paid-up capital of P5 million.

e. It must possess the necessary competence, expertise and capitalization to undertake the project as determined by the office.

3. Tax clearance duly issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue;

4. Audited financial statement and income tax return for the immediately preceding year, if applicable;

5. Joint and Several Solidary Undertaking executed in writing by the stockholders of the applicant corporation binding them personally and directly responsible for any damages, claims or injuries which the authorized corporation may be held liable to pay to PCSO or to any third party arising from the conduct of STL;

6. Bio-data of corporate officers and directors showing their qualifications integrity and experience;

7. Feasibility study on the experimental area applied for showing, among others, the following:

a. Illegal numbers game which operated in the area and its estimated daily sales based on field report.

b. Financial statistics showing projected STL sales and income.

c. Company profile and organizational structure.

d. Employment to be generated to include sales agents and total sales force.

e. Profile of the area (province, municipality or city) in terms of population, main source of livelihood, local products, industries, peace and order and other relevant information about the area to be operated on.

f. Manner of operation.

g. Executive summary of the report.

8. Sangguniang Panlalawigan resolution and/ or Municipal Mayors' League Provincial Chapter resolution inviting PCSO to conduct the STL project in their province, city or municipality;

9. Within 15 days from receipt of a favorable notice from PCSO, the applicants shall comply with additional requirements, if any, as contained in the notice and post with the PCSO Treasury Department the required cash bond in such amount as the Chairman and/or General Manager may prescribe, but in no case shall be less than the amount of P10,000,000, which shall answer for non-remittance, loss or theft of the STL proceeds, damages and all other liabilities of the corporation to PCSO or third parties arising from the conduct of the actual test runs.

PCSO
Medical Missions
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ANTIPOLO
BACOOR, CAVITE
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LOS BANOS, LAGUNA
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PACO, MANILA
MEYCAUAYAN, BULACAN
MEDICAL TEAM
MEDICAL TEAM

Advt

UK women prefer cleaning house to sex, says survey

From page A1

The Independent daily reported that "even in an age when women are making economic strides and excelling in the workplace, the one thing that gives the majority a sense of empowerment is a good go around the house with the vacuum cleaner—followed by some cleaning and dusting."

The online study, commissioned by the Discovery Home and Health website, found that the average woman between 18 and 80 spent nine years, two months and 25 days of her waking life cleaning and tidying.

But 59 percent of the women interviewed would have it no other way and said "cleaning makes them feel in control of their lives," while 60 percent said they found it "mentally therapeutic."

"Where 20 years ago housework was seen by many as a sign of female subjugation, the tide appears to have turned," the paper said.

Nearly six out of 10 women defended their role in the home and said they "felt depressed if their house was a mess," while 59 percent said "untidiness and clutter made them feel tense."

Only a tiny minority of 4 percent felt cleaning the home to be "a waste of time and effort."

The survey of 2,000 women found cleaning chores to be a higher priority than personal grooming, and one third claimed "cleaning gives them more satisfaction than sex."

Even so, 57 percent of the women admitted that cleaning exhausted them, particularly as 71 percent also had a job.

Although only 22 percent said they actively enjoyed cleaning and tidying, two-thirds said the "results made them happy" and half said it was "visually joyful" that left them feeling "proud of their achievements."

Nearly half of those interviewed (46 percent) described themselves as "cleanaholics," while 46 percent wished they could "cut down on cleaning."

Eight out of 10 respondents compared the cleanliness of their home with other people's, while 70 percent feared they would be thought "lazy" if their homes were untidy.

Only one of 10 women employed a cleaner, but of those six out of 10 "still cleaned up before she or he arrives," the survey said. *AFP*

El Shaddai leader . . .

From page A1

rogative to conduct legislative inquiries.

Malacañang had earlier declared it would invoke executive privilege against "rogue" hearings.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Sunday that the Senate would cite officials in contempt and detain them if they refused to participate in their inquiries.

Yesterday, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters that Malacañang would determine the extent to which it could invoke executive privilege during hearings.

Palace won't defy court

"I am going to sit down with our legal people to give me the nitty gritty of what and who can invoke executive privilege and that is very crucial," said Ermita. "It's not the attitude that we will defy or we will be indifferent ... We will go by the essence and spirit of the decision of the Supreme Court."

Velarde said the court decision was an opportunity to "reestablish cordial working relationships for the common good."

"It's my prayer that our leaders should now come together and discuss all these issues inside a meeting room. I believe very much that they can still come together as responsible leaders and settle their differences inside the conference room, not through media pronouncements," he said.

Velarde advised Malacañang officials to abide by the court ruling.

"We should not disregard any decision of the Supreme Court because we are still a government of laws, not of men. And leaders should be the first one to show an example of adherence to law and order," he said.

Need to close "Hello Garci"

"I see nothing wrong in investigations for as long as the purpose really is in aid of legislation and to enlighten the parties and the public at large on certain issues because it is our right to know what is going on in government. But to sacrifice time for important legislation just for controversial investigations, I think they should reconsider," Velarde said.

He said the unresolved "Hello Garci" controversy was one issue that the members of the House and the Senate should continue to investigate.

"It's really part of their job, but I think they should give it an ending," he said. "Of course, the only way to give it an ending is to get all the facts."

"There's nothing wrong in getting down to the truth but in doing so we should not forget our responsibility to provide the right direction and solutions to most pressing problems of the country like the economy," he said.

"There are so many people who are unemployed. The investment climate has to be cleared so that investors will come and these political issues serve as a deterrent to investors."

Calibrated response

To avert a fresh clash between Malacañang and the Senate, Sen. Rodolfo Biazon yesterday proposed the adoption of a four-step "calibrated congressional response" to deal with reluctant witnesses. This is a takeoff on the government's "calibrated preemptive response" to rallies without permits.

"The calibration will start from the issuance of an invitation. If this is refused, we will move on to a higher level, which is the issuance of a subpoena ... If this is still refused, we can move to a higher level, issuance of a warrant of arrest," he said.

"And if this still does not work, then we have to go to court."

The senator did not discount citing in contempt witnesses who repeatedly ignored summonses.

Biazon said his committee on national defense would adopt this policy when it continues its inquiry into the "Hello Garci" scandal shortly after Congress resumes sessions on May 15. The opposition has said the recordings purportedly between Ms Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano were evidence she stole the 2004 presidential election. Ms Arroyo has denied the charge.

Define executive privilege

Biazon proposed that Malacañang officials and Senate leaders meet to thresh out differences in interpretation of the court ruling, particularly on what constitutes executive privilege.

"What is the meaning of state secret, military secret and diplomatic secret? There must be a common understanding on what these terms connote," said Biazon.

The committee is eyeing as witnesses military generals and officers, and lawyer Samuel Ong, who surfaced in June last year claiming he had the master copies of the Garci tapes but had since kept a low profile. Ong said he feared for his life.

Administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago cautioned her colleagues against rushing to use Congress' contempt powers on defiant witnesses.

"Congress should avoid impulsive retaliatory measures, such as citing for contempt absent Cabinet members or abolishing budgetary appropriations of their departments. It is best to be patient because haste makes bad law," she said in a statement.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles and Rep. Eduardo Veloso warned that legislation should not be held hostage by Senate inquiries.

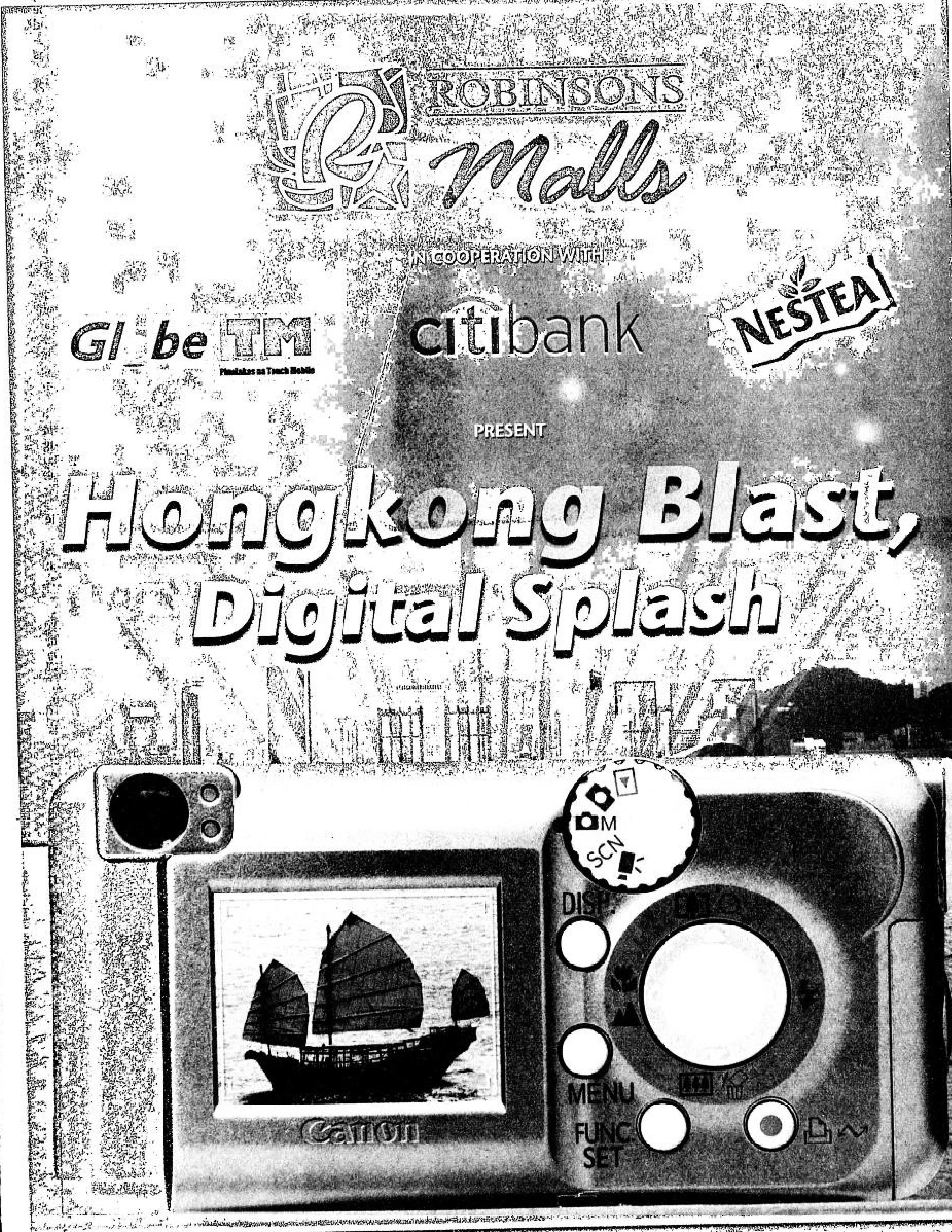
End 'terrorizing investigations"

"We in Congress must not browbeat or bully or embarrass invited guests. We must not insult them, argue with them and must treat them with respect, especially on their right to privacy. Terrorizing investigations must end," said Nograles.

"We do not wish to interfere in the Senate-Palace squabble. Our intention in appealing to the sense of statesmanship of senators is only to pave the way for a smooth legislative process," said Veloso.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero accused Malacañang of trying to circumvent the high court's decision.

"What are they so afraid of in answering questions if they did not commit any wrongdoing? If they have nothing to hide, why would they be frightened of the questions that would be thrown at them?" said Escudero. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, TJ Burgonio and Philip C. Tubeza*



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RP's first integrated ethanol plant to rise in Negros Or.

By Doris C. Dumlao

DUMAGUETE—THE PHILIPPINES' first integrated production complex for ethanol, an alternative fuel highly in demand across the globe because of skyrocketing oil prices, will rise in the sugar-farming province of Negros Oriental using P2 billion in fresh investment.

In a chance interview, Rep. Herminio Teves said the pioneering integrated plantation, distillery and cogeneration plant for ethanol using sugarcane would be operational within two years on a 24,116-hectare government property. The complex will be located in the third district of Negros Oriental spanning the municipalities of Sta. Catalina, Siaton, Valencia and Sibulan.

Aiming to replicate the success of other countries like Brazil in the commercial production of ethanol using sugarcane, Teves said the Philippines could maximize its vast agricultural lands to produce this sustainable fuel.

"You can't introduce any system for the production of oil because it's God-given but in the case of sugarcane, we can increase the volume for ethanol," Teves told visiting reporters from Manila, during the lawmaker's 86th birthday celebration held here Sunday night.

In pipeline

The ethanol project, an initiative by Teves, is now in the pipeline through a newly incorporated company called Tamlang Valley Development Agricultural Development Corp. Thirty-five percent of the company is owned by the government while 65 percent is owned by a private sector consortium controlled by alcohol distillery Tau Commodities and Teves's own family.

"The corporation is only worth P100 million but the total investment could go up to P2 billion, for the purchase of the equipment and overall project, including the distillery," he said.

The corporation recently signed the lease for the idle government land and is now negotiating with European and Brazilian suppliers to buy the necessary equipment. A purchase deal is expected within the next three months.

Foreign investment

"There are also foreign investors wanting to come in," Teves said.

The congressman said ethanol production could be rolled out into a nationwide initiative to reduce reliance on imported crude oil—whose price has gone up to a record-high $75 per barrel—by converting vast idle properties in Mindanao into sugarcane plantations.

Teves said he suggested to President Macapagal-Arroyo that in order for the model distillery to work, the plantations must be devoted to ethanol production so as not to compete with sugar produced for food consumption.

Prices of sugar in the global market have likewise risen since Brazil pioneered the commercial production of ethanol using sugarcane.

"In the Philippines, sugarcane is the easiest crop to produce. But considering the world market price for sugar, it will be prohibitive for us to convert existing sugarcanes into ethanol. We have to venture into new areas of sugarcane production in order to separately produce ethanol for the purpose of blending with gasoline," Teves said.

Prices to remain high

He predicted that sugar prices would remain high in the next five years because many countries were converting sugarcane plantations into ethanol production sites. He noted that 50 percent of sugar plantations in Brazil had been converted to ethanol plantations and distilleries, 30 percent in Thailand and more than 20 percent in Australia.

With the shift to ethanol, he said sugar prices would be buoyant due to the reduction in the sugarcane supply for food consumption.

"Ethanol would be competing with the price of sugar unless we develop an area only for ethanol," he said. "That's why I thought of putting up a corporation for the plantation of sugarcane for ethanol in order to have a distinct land area for ethanol."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, April 25, 2006
Mark, Evangelist

1st Reading: 1 P 5:5-14
Gospel: Mark 16:15-20

Jesus told his disciples, "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; the one who refuses to believe will be condemned. Signs like these will accompany those who have believed: in my Name they will cast out demons and speak new languages; they will pick up snakes and, if they drink anything poisonous, they will be unharmed. They will lay their hands on the sick and they will be healed."

So then, after speaking to them, the Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven and took his place at the right hand of God. The Eleven went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs which accompanied them."

Commentary

Mark: the disciple and companion, spiritual son of Peter, and the one who was inspired to write the Gospel of Mark. Mark's gospel ends with the proclamation to go forth into the whole world and preach, relying on the Lord being with them in word/deed and saving power. Peter is in jail facing death by crucifixion and sending greetings of faith, of hope and love to the community. Mark's words (written around 63 AD) would come after Peter's death but they had been spoken daily before they were written down for us. Mark was a young follower, running from the garden in fear, but standing in the tomb, unafraid and preaching the resurrection. We too must learn to do the same.

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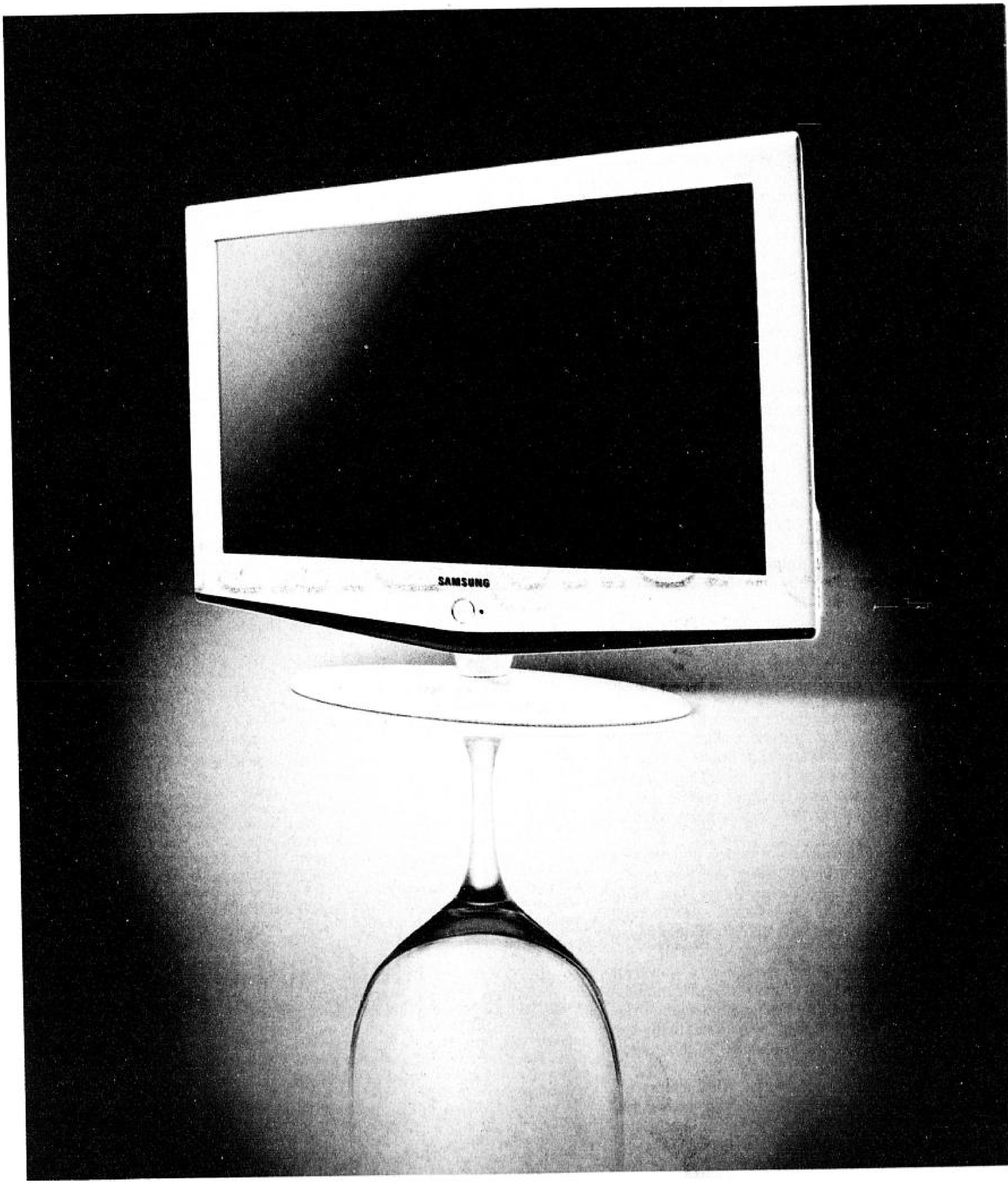

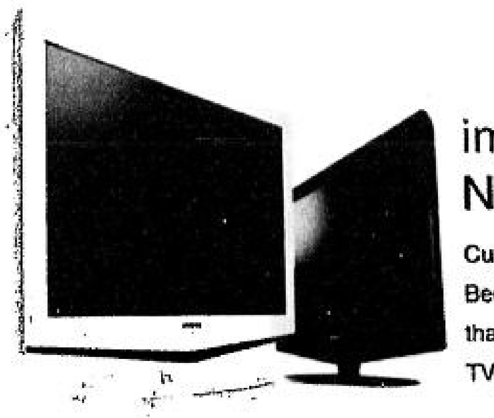

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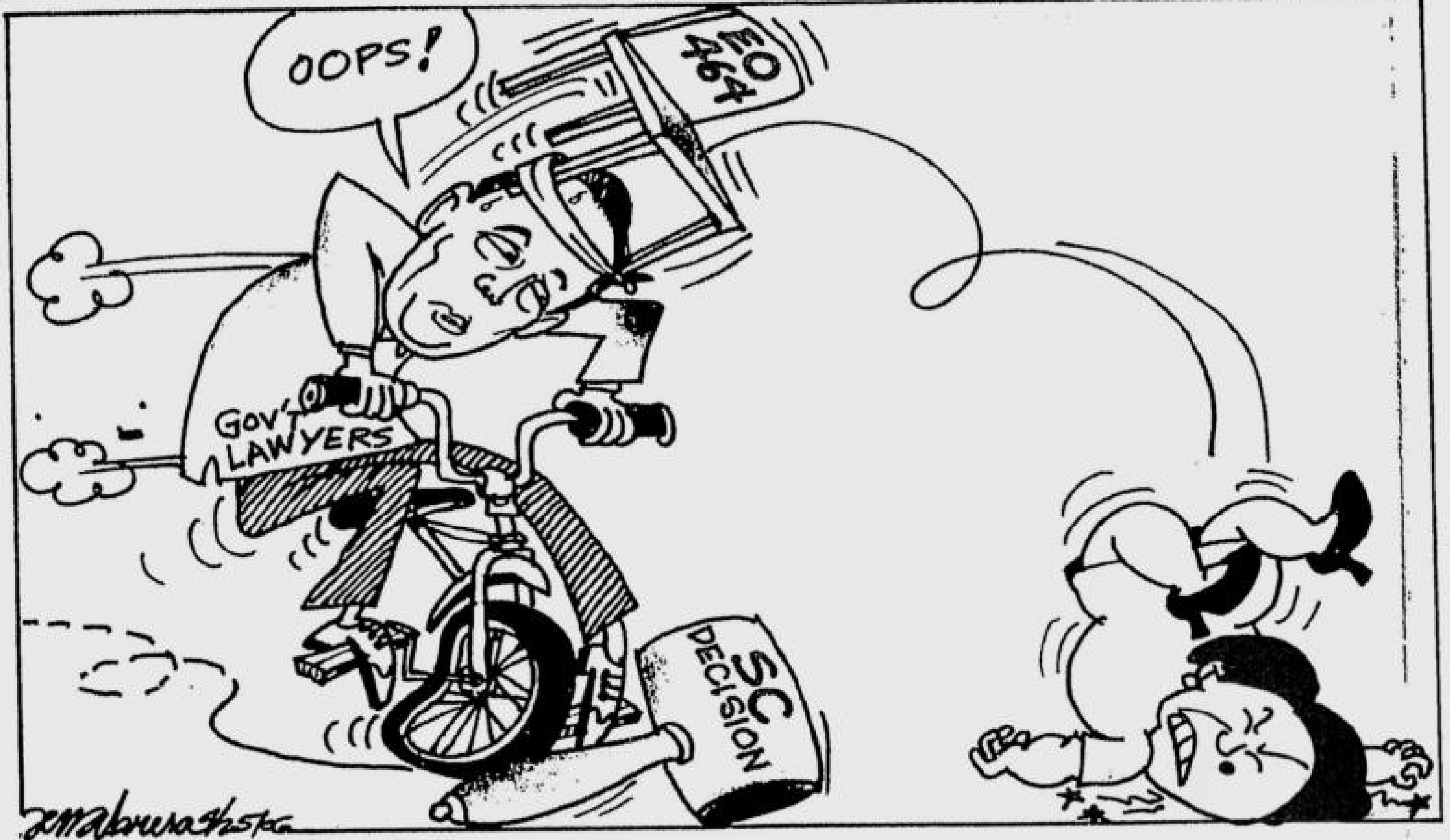

Oil shock

EDITORIAL

THE SUDDEN SURGE IN WORLD OIL PRICES HAS revived calls for power conservation and given greater impetus to the search for alternative sources of energy.

On the conservation side there are the usual tips: Drive your car carefully and maintain it properly. Go easy on the gas pedal. Avoid idling and high speeds. Plan errands so you can combine them into one trip. Keep tires properly inflated.

Turn off everything not in use: lights, TV sets, electronic appliances. Switch to fluorescent lamps. Use natural light whenever possible. Minimize the use of air conditioners and electric fans. Do all the ironing all at one time. Etc.

The energy-saving tips are good for the short term, but long-term measures have to be taken so that the country can enjoy a measure of energy security in the face of the constantly rising prices of fuel oils caused by the seemingly endless turmoil in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

The long-term approach would be to intensify the local search for alternative sources of energy. One rich source is biomass which can be used not only for heating and cooking but also powering vehicles and providing a source of hydrogen for fuel cells and electricity production.

Many provinces, like Albay, Leyte and Negros Oriental, are already producing geothermal energy, but other areas could be explored and developed. Geothermal systems are among the most environmentally benign sources of energy. Geothermal energy could provide a big area of the country with a clean and reliable source of power.

Hydropower could be a rich and cheap source of energy if only the huge volume of water that pours during the rainy season could be stored and dammed. Unfortunately, there is a price to pay for dam building: people and animals pay a stiff ecological price for blocking the free flow of natural river systems.

Nuclear fusion? This does not seem to be a popular idea in the Philippines now, considering its sad and very expensive experience with the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. Right now, we are paying the dollar equivalent of more than P5 million a day for a power plant that has not produced even one kilowatt of energy and has not benefited us at all.

Solar energy, like geothermal energy, is a powerful source of renewable power. It is also an environment-friendly power source but it has been very much underdeveloped. Currently the technology is still relatively expensive and may not be easily adaptable on a countrywide level in the Philippines.

Wind energy? A green power source, wind energy offers the benefits of a clean, renewable and indigenous source of power. Wind farms have been set up in the Ilocos and Batangas. Other areas might be explored for their potential to produce energy through wind power.

At present, a popular topic of conversation in local energy circles is biofuels, and in particular, ethanol. The proponents of the use of ethanol, called "the fuel of the future," say that it is sustainable for as long as sugarcane, coconuts, cassava and corn could be planted in the country.

Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri's biofuels bill was passed by the House of Representatives and sent to the Senate last November, but up to now it is stuck in the Senate committee on energy. Government leaders should prod the committee to act on the measure more expeditiously; ethanol could replace one-tenth of the national gasoline consumption within four years.

To cope with the new energy crunch, Congress should consider reviewing the Oil Deregulation Law and see whether it has served only the interests of the big oil companies like Shell, Caltex and Petron instead of those of the long-suffering consumers of petroleum products. If the law has produced only misery for the people then it should go.

It is good that Malacañang is proposing the suspension of the expanded VAT on oil up to December or until the oil price stabilizes at $65 a barrel. That should help ease the burden on the oil consumers who are already feeling the effects of a high inflation rate.

The nation appears to have made a bit of economic progress in recent years, but what little progress it has achieved may be wiped out by the new oil shock that is sending ripples throughout the world, and most especially vulnerable Third World countries like the Philippines. The government and the private sector will have to take some quick measures to meet the crisis before it overwhelms us and puts us back in square one.

Drinking the pond dry

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

FOUR YEARS OF FOOT-DRAGGING BY CEBU City bureaucrats are causing an Ayala-led multinational consortium to consider junking investments for water in the country's most parched metropolis.

Button-down Ayala Corp. is usually bland. But in the latest discussions between the decrepit Metro Cebu Water District and Ayala and Stateland Inc., it candidly states: "Potential co-investors... might withdraw from the project."

Submitted in 2002, the Joint Venture Consortium proposal would funnel 50,000 cubic meters of water daily from Carmen to the city, a distance of 39 kilometers. Metro Cebu's daily demand for water now exceeds 275,000 cubic meter. The MCWD provides only over 100,000 cu meters, although it serves less than half of city households. It loses 38 percent of the water to theft and leakages.

City Hall can't afford JVC type projects. A quarter of its budget pays devaluation-bloated yen loans for Mayor Tomas Osmeña's South Reclamation Project, which is water short.

No other credible investors are around. Investments for water "waned after publicized financial losses incurred in concession contracts in Manila, Jakarta and Latin America," the Asian Development Bank notes. The ADB is convening 200 experts at the end of May to address this concern.

A consortium pullout would confirm findings by the "Philippine Cities Competitiveness" survey that among 13 metro cities, Cebu trailed at "ninth in responsiveness to business needs." Davao, Makati, Marikina and Muntinlupa ranked ahead of Cebu, the Asian Institute of Management study added.

"Frogs do not drink up the pond in which they live," an old Inca proverb says. "In Cebu City, the sustainable capacity of its small (180 sq km) aquifers has been exceeded 3.6 times, and 7.4 times in Mandaue," studies by the US-AID, Delft University and ADB show.

Water tables are slumping. E-coli bacteria from human and animal waste have shut down some wells. Others are turning brackish, a sign that salt water is seeping into emptied aquifers.

"The saline water edge has penetrated three kilometers inland," says the Water Resources Center which tracked salination since 1973. "It is moving at the rate of 100 to 150 meters per year." Contamination now brushes against the foothills.

Osmeña's administration "never worked it's way through to a comprehensive urban policy," the Cebu Daily News noted. "Water, garbage, land use and others remain policy black holes."

Results careened between the bizarre to pathetic. Osmeña earlier proposed a snow-fed Lake Arrowhead of California, which serves 25,000 people, as model for Cebu's tropical watershed, which serves over a million. "He reminds us of a line from Acts of the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday," the Sun Star said. "This man is not drunk, as many seem to think. It is only nine in the morning."

Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and civil society got President Fidel Ramos to issue Proclamation 1074 to correct falsified maps because Osmeña couldn't be bothered by the issue. His partisans dominate the MCWD.

The mayor stomps on dissent, compounding policy flaws. The city council is a "harem of eunuchs" unable to fiscalize. "What Osmeña wants, Osmeña gets," GMA-7 commentator Bobby Nalzaro notes.

Trapped in this policy vacuum was the draft agreement on the JVC proposal. Negotiated over three years, it was anchored to the Dublin Conference Principle that water is an "economic good." It becomes available when a "fair return" is ensured for investors.

In the fourth year of talks, a new set of MCWD consultants scuppered the draft agreement with new demands: decrease volume delivery to 42,000 cubic meters per day, scrap joint management rights in the event of a default by the MCWD, etc. "The voice is that of Jacob, but the hands are those of Esau."

Time lost, inflation and spreading aquifer damage, meanwhile, take their toll. The new conditions result in "a return on investment lower that what was approved by government," the summary notes. So, has City Hall left this serious investor no other recourse but to pick up its marbles?

The ADB's 12-volume study "Water For All" notes that politicians all over the region try to curry favor with voters by shoving water bills below production cost. The result is less water from shoddy service. "Water utilities ... cannot cover even maintenance and operational costs." It locks firms into obsolescence as "they cannot generate funds for expansion.

There is no substitute for water. So, governments must "create an environment conducive for successful public and private investment," the ADB says. The first major step: "Establish credible regulatory frameworks devoid of political interference."

Asia has successful examples in Singapore's Public Utilities Board, the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority and Manila Water Inc., the ADB points out. In Manila, the Ayala firm expanded its coverage from 325,000 to 593,000 households, installed water taps for 138,000 indigent families, reduced costs of water by 29 percent with a reduced staff, ensured 24-hour service—and made a fair profit.

"Experience shows that a principal impediment to accessing financing for the water sector is the absence of good governance," the ADB points out. "The reverse is likewise true. Good governance can lead to increasing financial viability and consequently improving access to finance."

That's Cebu all right.

Thank God for Theresa Pangilinan!

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IF YOU'VE BEGUN TO DESPAIR ABOUT THIS country recovering its wit and grit, its moral thunder and physical courage, despair no more. Ma. Theresa Pangilinan has just shown us there's still hope for this country. Indeed, she has just shown us that Jose Rizal was right: the youth is the hope of the fatherland, or motherland, however it is called politically correctly these days.

Pangilinan, in case you don't already know (in which case your head must now be a permanent fixture of the sand from having been buried there too long), is the graduate of Cavite State University who shouted "*Patalsikin si Gloria*" and held up a banner that said, "No to Chacha!" while GMA was delivering a speech during their graduation. She was joined by several other students before they were silenced by cops and the Presidential Security Group. "*Huwag kayong mambastos*!" Supt. Roberto Soriano ordered.

Their outburst stunned GMA who stopped talking for a while. She had just been telling the students about the importance of mastering English to land jobs in the Cavite economic zone. She subsequently recovered her composure and went on to finish her speech.

Pangilinan, the president of the Central Student Government, was later allowed to go on stage to get her diploma. She shook hands with GMA, but as the pictures on our front page showed, they studiously avoided looking at each other. GMA had on a smile that looked, well, fake.

As *pambabastos*, or insolence, goes, Pangilinan's insolence ranks pretty close to the one Edgar Jopson showed 36 years ago (has it been that long?) when, during a visit of students to Malacañang, he asked Ferdinand Marcos to put down in writing that he would not run for office again after his second term. The infuriated Marcos ended the meeting abruptly. Jopson and company brought their case to the streets, and soon afterward a series of protests erupted. It would come to be known as the First Quarter Storm. History would show Jopson had every reason to do what he did.

Indeed, as impudence goes, Pangilinan's is nearly the same one the boy in "The Emperor's New Clothes" showed. That story tells of an emperor who agreed to wear magical clothes that only the wisest men and women in his domain could see. On the day the "clothes" were finished, by a con man masquerading as a tailor, the emperor went out to parade his apparent finery. All the spectators, who had lined up on the sides of the street and who did not wish to appear stupid, marveled loudly at the fineness and magnificence of the weave. Until the parade passed by a small boy who shouted, "The emperor is naked! The emperor is naked!" Pangilinan's shouts of "Fake! Fake!" while GMA was delivering her speech were not unlike that.

Soriano is right that people should show respect for others, particularly their superiors. He is wrong to address that injunction to Pangilinan and company. Who was insulting whom in that graduation? You are Pangilinan, you will wonder too what credentials your guest speaker has to lecture you on the subject of how best to get ahead in life—the honest way. You know that you are a reasonably genuine future leader of the community while the person in front of you is an arguably fake current leader of the nation. You know that you at least won your diploma through hard work, the one thing your teachers taught you to value like life, while the person in front of you won the presidency through cheating, the one thing your teachers taught you to loathe like a plague.

Inferior and superior are tricky concepts. They have nothing to do with the trappings of the body, they have to do with the nakedness of the soul. They have nothing to do with positions of power, they have to do with conditions of being. You are Pangilinan, you will know that by all this country holds good and decent and wise, you are not your guest speaker's inferior, you are her superior. You have a right to say, "*Huwag po kayong mambabastos.*"

Less than a month go, I wrote a column where I said that this year's graduations were occasions more for sadness than joy because of one thing. Graduations are normally a time for class valedictorians and guest speakers to talk about youthful idealism and driving oneself to excellence, about nobleness and reaching for things that lie beyond one's grasp. Not today. Today, graduates see all around them only resolute refutations of those beliefs. They see all around them only a world where mediocrity is accepted as a way of life and heroism deemed a folly, where meanness and wrongdoing are taken to be the normal course of things and truth and justice scoffed at as an indulgence. I asked how any graduation could be held this year without its spirit clashing violently with reality.

That the very source of this country's plunge into new lows of spiritual and moral abjectness should present herself as the source of inspiration for the one group of people known to resist gravity, who are the youth, well, what happened in Cavite State University was an embarrassment waiting to happen. That the one person who has taught by her example—which is the most powerful pedagogy there is; you teach by what you do, not by what you say—that the best way to get ahead in life is to cheat and the best way to not be found out is to suppress and oppress should deign to impress the one group of people who can still see when emperors are naked, well, what happened in Cavite State University was poetic justice waiting to happen.

Thank God, the kids still have the capacity to discern good and evil. Thank God, the kids still have a lot of wit and grit, light in their minds and fire in their bellies. Thank God for Theresa Pangilinan.

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Nine million hits for Sigaw website

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

WITH THE WHOLE WORLD BRACING FOR A new round of oil price increases in the next few weeks due to problems affecting supplies, it's lamentable that our senators seem unconcerned about it. Oil industry leaders warn that the current price of $75 per barrel could shoot up to more than $90 a barrel. This could wreck small economies such as ours and throw millions of our countrymen out of work but sadly, to the senators, spurred by the recent Supreme Court ruling on EO 464, this doesn't seem as important as sharpening their knives as they resume their fight against the administration when Congress reopens on May 15.

* * *

As other commentators have noted, the SC took a balanced approach in its decision on EO 464. It stressed the need for Congress to ferret information from the Executive Branch "in aid of legislation" and the people's right to information, while recognizing the President's right to invoke executive privilege in certain instances. But the reality is that the two branches are coming in from different directions. The Palace is uncomfortable with the Senate's persistent poking into controversies, while the chamber is dominated by an opposition that has not abandoned its plan to oust GMA.

* * *

What has suffered from the fierce political wrangling is the task of legislation. Pending in the Senate are 308 bills passed by the House of Representative, 20 of which are of national importance or deal with vital economic reforms. Among these are the 2006 budget, the Anti-Terrorism Bill, the rationalization of fiscal incentives, the amendments to the charter of Bangko Sentral and the reduction of income tax for low-income earners. Also pending in the Senate is the Bioethanol Fuel Bill, which seeks to speed up the development of alternative fuels and make us less dependent on oil.

* * *

The fight between the Senate and the Executive and between the two chambers of Congress is perhaps the best argument for the abolition of both chambers and the creation of a unicameral legislature. I have long supported a unicameral chamber as the far more efficient and responsive set-up. But yesterday's Manila Standard Today gave an equally convincing reason. In a two-part series, Christine Herrera opined that senators refuse to support the proposed shift to a parliamentary system mainly because each of them stands to lose P1.2 billion in pork barrel funds, P72 million in committee funds and P12 million in travel funds. This is "apart from the millions of pesos earmarked for their offices—money that they may spend any way they like," Herrera pointed out. She said that while each House member gets P70 million for his district, each senator gets P200 million in pork barrel annually, which adds up to P2.4 billion over two terms.

Last year, Herrera said, the 23-member Senate had a total budget of P1.38 billion while the 236-member House had P2.93 billion. Divide the six laws passed last year by Congress and that would mean that each law cost the taxpayers P718 million, but had there been only one chamber the cost would have been P480 million. Herrera quoted Speaker Jose de Venecia as opining that more than six laws would surely have been enacted if we had a unicameral set-up.

* * *

I dare say public awareness of the gargantuan expense in a two-chamber set up and the stifling gridlock have been the main reasons the parliamentary/unicameral idea has made enormous headway. Sigaw ng Bayan spokesperson Raul Lambino reports a phenomenal nine million visits to the Sigaw website (www.sigawngbayan.com) since its launch less than three weeks ago. He says cybertraffic to the site is so heavy that Sigaw has had to increase its Internet servers. It's said that no other RP website can claim so many hits in such a short time involving a single issue. Nine million represents almost 20 percent of the total number of registered voters.

Lambino said that another indication of the widespread interest in this issue is that the percentage of Filipinos who approve amending the Constitution was only slightly over 20 percent in October last year, but their number jumped to 43 percent in the latest independent survey. The number of those resisting Charter reform has steadily declined, reaching its lowest ever at 48 percent. If accurate, these figures would belie claims that people are not aware of the Cha-cha issue.

* * *

I'm not sure if it's the political weight of the eminent letter-writer or the Palace's new-found sensitivity to certain issues that worked. Former Senate President Jovito Salonga, president of Kilosbayan and adviser to Bantay Katarungan, wrote Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita earlier this month, reiterating the two NGOs' determination to file a petition in the Supreme Court against Small Town Lottery in case the government refused to "cease and desist from carrying out (this) illegal and immoral scheme on a nationwide basis." Salonga cited the argument of Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and the PSCO that STL is being conducted to wipe out *jueteng*, which means that the government itself would operate gambling nationwide. Recalling how President Corazon Aquino abandoned STL as a "failed experiment," Salonga said it was a crime against public morals punishable under the Revised Penal Code, and condemnable since the masses would bear the brunt of subsidizing its operations and the government would be perpetrating the offense.

A week later, Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor wrote Salonga to "please be advised that we are conducting a careful study of the issues and concerns you raised in your letter." Defensor assured that "we welcome dialogue with affected sectors and stakeholders."

Salonga reads this as the Palace's way of stopping STL. Indeed, it has nothing to gain from STL but the erosion of our people's morals.

Enjoy the gift!

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AS SO OFTEN HAPPENS IN COLUMN-WRITING, what I initially thought was a brief, hurried comment on a magazine spread featuring six "ordinary" women posing in the nude generated so many reactions—generally favorable—that even I was taken aback.

What readers mostly reacted to, though, was not the pictorial, but what I wrote about ageing—specifically how looks and physical desirability cease to matter (or rather, matter as much) to a woman as she gets older.

Of course, who wouldn't want to be in the shoes of Francesca Annis, 61, until very recently the significant other of actor Ralph Fiennes, 43. Who wouldn't want to be squired around by one of the best-looking actors in the biz, an actor of smoldering fire and electrical intensity? But the trouble with pairing off with a hunk is the pressure to be a babe yourself, and at 61, Francesca, a good-looking woman judging by her pictures, must have found babe-hood an increasingly elusive and tiresome occupation.

Most women, by the time they near or overtake Francesca's age are mostly content with the older (balding, paunchy, low-bat) men they married, or happy with the life they have carved out for themselves, alone or with a partner.

And most women, it turns out, realize sooner or later that taut skin, firm muscles and perky breasts are a small price to pay for earning the body, the confidence, the fearlessness and the experience you gain as time marches on.

* * *

MY FRIEND Mila Alora sent the following piece in reaction to that column on ageing. Because it was merely forwarded to me, I have no way of discovering its provenance, and so must attribute it to an "anonymous" author. Still, I am grateful to this unnamed woman who shares her thoughts on the perks that come with the "gift" that is old age, or even just late middle age. In a world where women come under relentless fire and endless exhortations to lubricate, moisturize, cleanse, tone and stretch the physical shell, it feels good to encounter a piece like this that tells us it's all right to finally let go, to relax the vigilance and simply BE.

"Maybe what I really want more than 'growing old gracefully' is just to be authentic," writes Gilda Cordero Fernando in her essay "Goodness gracious!" (from "The Last Full Moon: Lessons on My Life"). "Maybe that was what I was searching for all my life. The courage to be me. Not someone I'm supposed to be, or psych myself to be—not the accepted model of propriety in pink linen slacks and a signature handbag. I can't live imprisoned in someone's idea of a fashionable home. I need to fly, to dance a storm, to taste the sky! And like the favorite song of the karaoke bars that its singers get shot for, maybe it's okay if I did it my way."

Doing it your way—growing old without apologies and with the sweet aftertaste of dessert on your tongue. Now that's a recipe for wonderful ageing!

* * *

THE OTHER day a young person asked me how I felt about being old. I was taken aback, for I do not think of myself as old. Upon seeing my reaction, he was immediately embarrassed, but I explained that it was an interesting question, and I would ponder it, and let him know.

Old age, I decided, is a gift.

I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be. Oh, not my body! I sometimes despair over my body—the wrinkles, the baggy eyes, and the sagging butt. And often I am taken aback by that old person that lives in my mirror, but I don't agonize over those things for long.

I would never trade my amazing friends, my wonderful life, my loving family for less gray hair or a flatter belly. As I've aged, I've become more kind to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend. I don't chide myself for eating that extra cookie, or for not making my bed, or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need but looks so avant garde on my patio. I am entitled to overeat, to be messy, to be extravagant. I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon, before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it if I choose to read or play on the computer until 4 a.m. and sleep until noon?

* * *

I WILL dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 1960s, and if I, at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love, I will.

I will walk the beach in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body and will dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the bikini set. They, too, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But then again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And I eventually remember the important things.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when a beloved pet gets hit by a car?

But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turn gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver. I can say "no" and mean it. I can say "yes" and mean it.

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question: I like being old.

It has set me free.

I like the person I have become.

I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be.

And I shall eat dessert every single day.

Italy returns to political paralysis

WORLD VIEW

Guido Tabellini

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, ITALY HAS BEEN ruled through a bipolar political system. Voters could choose between a left-wing coalition and a right-wing coalition. Those disappointed by the incumbent government could vote for the opposition. And the existence of a viable alternative has had a disciplining effect on politicians: not by chance, Silvio Berlusconi's government served its entire electoral term.

This is in stark contrast to the Italian political tradition. Throughout the post-war era, until the early 1990s, Italian governments survived less than a year on average. Voters were unable to choose between the incumbent and the opposition, because the same centrist parties were in office all the time. Government crises were merely an opportunity to reshuffle key cabinet positions or change the party faction of the prime minister.

However, there is now a high risk that Italian politicians will return to their old habits. This may seem strange, given the antagonism between Romano Prodi and Silvio Berlusconi during the electoral campaign. But that antagonism reflected the personalization of politics achieved by Berlusconi, as well as an institutional feature that he abolished. One of the last acts of his government was to replace the majoritarian electoral system, introduced in 1993, with proportional rule. The new electoral system changes the politicians' incentives, and could induce a return to shifting coalitions and unstable governments. This outcome would be accelerated if, as is likely, Berlusconi himself were to distance himself from politics in the coming electoral term.

Under the new electoral rules, seats are allotted to parties in proportion to votes, but a special provision induces parties to forge pre-electoral agreements: the pre-electoral coalition that wins the most votes receives a seat premium that ensures a comfortable majority in the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house). Unfortunately, the new law—hastily enacted at the last minute of the previous legislature—has a silly formulation that does not guarantee an equally safe majority in the Senate. As a result, Prodi has won a large margin in the lower house, but he has only a handful of extra votes in the Senate. Given Italy's almost perfect bicameralism, this means that the new government will find it very difficult to function even under ideal circumstances.

But Italy's circumstances are far from ideal. The new government will face formidable challenges. The budget deficit is again out of control, and well over the 3-percent-of-GDP Maastricht ceiling. The aging population is straining the public pension and healthcare systems beyond sustainability. The manufacturing sector, squeezed by stagnating productivity and competition from China and other low-cost producers, is no longer competitive. Many services remain inefficient, because they are either in the domain of an archaic public administration or enjoy monopoly rents created by regulatory barriers.

Inaction is simply not an option for the new government. And yet agreement on virtually everything of significance will be very difficult to reach. Prodi's left-wing l'Unione coalition comprises a hodge-podge of parties spread all over the political spectrum, ranging from staunch communists to former liberals (with communists stronger than in the previous election). Under the new electoral system, all of these parties will be competing with each other for the same votes, and each one will seek to protect its own constituency or claim credit for whatever is accomplished. Given l'Unione's razor-thin majority in the upper house, the most likely outcome is paralysis.

As if this was not enough, Prodi will face another problem. Just before stepping down, Berlusconi's government also approved a constitutional reform that, among other things, provides a logical complement to the new electoral system. In particular, the new constitution strengthens the powers of the prime minister and enables him to call early elections in the event of a government crisis. This provision would be an important weapon in Prodi's hands. But the left-wing parties that support him have already announced that they will block the constitutional reform, which they opposed for other reasons. Hence, Prodi will almost certainly be deprived of his best tool for imposing discipline on his unruly coalition.

What is likely to happen when a large and heterogeneous coalition with barely a parliamentary majority must govern in an increasingly dire economic situation? The answer is almost obvious: either the government will collapse, or it will seek to poach supporters from opposition parties. Which of these two outcomes will materialize also depends on what happens inside Berlusconi's camp, and that is less easy to predict.

But, either way, the bipolar political system to which Italians were getting accustomed is unlikely to survive unscathed. The left-right divide will become easier for opportunistic politicians to cross, and perhaps a new centrist party will emerge. As a result, Italy will soon return to its older tradition of short-lived governments and unstable coalitions.

Of course, Prodi could preserve a bipolar political system—and thus increase the longevity of his government—by either restoring a majoritarian electoral system or pressing ahead with other constitutional amendments designed to preserve government and coalition stability. But forcing such changes on his coalition partners could be as difficult for Prodi as tackling Italy's daunting economic problems.

Project Syndicate

Guido Tabellini is professor of economics at Bocconi University, Milan.

Unexpected eulogy

YOUNG BLOOD

Fatima Avila

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

IT WAS ALREADY THE WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING OF April 3, and I was still up, chatting with friends on the Internet. I don't know why, but for some reason, a friend and I were talking about wakes and funerals. We were going on about where we would want our wake to be, what song would be playing in the background, who we think would visit, who we think would deliver a eulogy for us. It was a long conversation revolving around ourselves and how we wanted to be remembered, but in the end we shared one insight: we would be touched and eternally grateful if someone we least expected to speak went up the podium, reached for the microphone and delivered some kind words about us. Wouldn't it be wonderful to know that, unknowingly, we had touched someone's life?

Right after I pressed the enter key to end that statement, my cell phone rang, and I was told that a high school batch mate of mine had shot himself in the head just a couple of minutes earlier.

Words cannot express what I was feeling. Shock, disbelief, bewilderment—all were raging inside me. It couldn't be true. It just couldn't. It was my best friend who called, and we had a history of pulling pranks on each other, so even after she said it, I still left room for the possibility that it was not so.

But it was true: Robert was dead. And we all had to accept the fact, however difficult it might be. And it was very difficult.

Late into the morning, my best friend was still spreading the news about Robert's death through text. They were close family friends, and that was the task assigned to her. It was a simple text informing the recipients of his passing and details about the wake, and requesting for prayers for him and the family he left behind.

His mother was a widow. His brother blamed himself totally because the gun that Robert used was his. It's always hard for family when a member dies, but given the circumstances, Robert's death was infinitely harder for his mother and brother.

In high school, Robert wasn't the kind of student who was called up to the stage during recognition day to receive an academic award. He wasn't a jock, and had very few extracurricular activities. He made a couple of imprudent decisions, got hooked on a vice or two, and repeated junior year. From what I heard from my best friend, he wasn't really close to his family either. In other words, he wasn't perfect. Just like each and every one of us.

I didn't know Robert well. He was just an acquaintance, a family friend of my best friend, an ex-boyfriend's *kabarkada* in the old days, a familiar face I used to see every day along the hallway of our high school. So I can't explain why I am greatly affected and bothered by his death. Maybe it's the manner in which he died, maybe it's the mystery behind it (he didn't leave a note), or maybe it's just the waste of life.

He shouldn't have died. He shouldn't have died. He shouldn't have died. That's what I think over and over again. No one so young should die. He only lived a quarter of his life, and did not even reach his prime. He should have been in college, doing what me and our other batch mates are doing: living and enjoying our lives.

But life's not fair. We should deal with it with acceptance, not bitterness, a friend told me. And she's right. Robert's dying wasn't fair to his family, to his friends and even to him, but there are things that are beyond our control and we should accept that. As priests are quick to say, "We should see death for what it really is: the end of poverty and the beginning of riches, the end of fear and the beginning of tranquility, the end of pain and the beginning of strength."

As for Robert, we should remember him not because of his imperfections but because of all the beautiful years he shared with the people around him. He wasn't the perfect student, but he was a thoughtful and caring friend. He wasn't close to his family, but he loved them and they loved him greatly in return. Closeness is a relative term anyway, while love is absolute.

One last thing. Why was I up at past 2 a.m. last April 3? Why was I chatting? Why was that particular friend who asks weird questions online, too? Why were we talking about funerals of all the many weird things to talk about? Why did my best friend call the second after I had pressed the enter key? It's weird, really weird, but somehow rather enlightening.

Exactly two weeks after his death, I suddenly have an epiphany: Because we were talking about funerals, my friend and I came up with a shared insight. And because of that insight, I'm writing this essay. I am probably the last person anyone would expect to speak about him. But somehow, I feel I owe this to Robert

Fatima Avila, 19, is a legal management junior at the Ateneo de Manila University.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Alien problem

"Being beautiful is not a problem for me in my work. My problem is my name—Jovovich! People say, 'Oh it's a foreign sounding name, let's make her an alien!"
—*Hollywood actress Milla Jovovich*

Truth in acting

"I told him that an actor's job involves the quest for truth. It was my task to open up his mind."
—*Acting coach Soliman Cruz on teen actor Nathan Lopez, winner of an international acting award for his portrayal of a young, flamboyant gay boy, a role Lopez initially resisted*

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Dissent has value

WHENEVER A MAJORITY RULES and makes a social decision, such as by electing a president, it constrains or expands the set of choices that would be available to future generations. This in itself is neither good nor bad. But when the same majority suppresses dissent, there is always the risk that future generations would be deprived of those viewpoints that might prove useful in their search for remedies to the bad, if unintended, consequences of the decisions of their ancestors. Dissenting Supreme Court justices have the consolation of having their views taken down for posterity. Dissenting citizens must not have their posters torn down.

Can democracy exist, survive, or flourish without dissent? This is an old question to which the old—and eternal—answer is "No."

Remove dissent, that is, suppress dissenters—by beating, jailing, torturing, or shooting them, or by branding them with the code words "communist," "enemy of the state," or "destabilizer," thereby cowing them or chasing them to the slaughter—and what vanishes is democracy itself. What remains—the detritus of dissent dispersed—can never give rise to democracy. Can democracy be founded on crumpled placards and pamphlets, torn flags and shirts, cracked skulls and broken limbs?

Is democracy made of tear gas fumes?

Barricading the *munisipyo*, city hall or *kapitolyo* is a time-honored pastime for Filipino politicians and their hangers-on whenever the canvassing of electoral votes is about to end, or whenever an incumbent public official is declared by election arbiters to have legally, if not actually, lost the election.

We may charitably call these barricades expressions of dissent. But it is dissent against mere electoral outcomes. What we need is dissent against our electoral processes, expressed in the hope that an improved method of choosing our leaders will lead to better choices.

Most democracies subscribe to Majority Rule as a way to arriving at reasonable decisions. But Majority Rule is also Dissent Overruled. In a democracy it should never be Dissent Penalized.

Democracy is a centrifuge that turns viscous opinions into social decisions. Dissent is sometimes needed to help clarify such decisions.

Our centrifuge failed to produce an unadulterated electoral decision in 2004. Dissenters are protesting against this lack of clarity, and are asking that we proceed to repair a necessary but defective social device. To suppress this dissent by whipping an entire society is vicious. It is to beat an egg (some of whose whites have expressed a desire to be unburdened of a broken yolk) to submission.

—JOSELITO B. SAN JOSE,
100 Esteban Abada St.,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City

Not for all health workers

THIS IS IN REACTION TO CIELITO Goño's commentary titled "Mandatory service." (PDI, 4/1//06) I see nothing wrong with the government requiring doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers to render mandatory service, provided they went through medical school with the help (e.g., adequate educational subsidies) of the government. But I believe it would be unfair to force those who studied with their own money to serve in far-flung areas.

For one thing, doctors finish their course at a much later age, unlike those who take business or engineering courses who graduate generally at a younger age. Doctors, therefore, have less time to recover their investment and to save enough money for their retirement needs.

Second, the government cannot guarantee the safety of medical workers in far-flung areas, especially where communist or Muslim insurgents have a strong presence. Recently, the INQUIRER carried a news story about a military detachment overrun by NPA (New People's Army) rebels. If soldiers can't protect their camps, can civilians do better to protect themselves?

Third, more important than receiving medical care is the quality of health care that is being given. What kind of service does the government expect to provide the sick if those who are to provide it are forced to do so? Only volunteers who genuinely want to render medical service in difficult areas would be able to provide quality medical care.

Finally, mandatory service will reduce the desirability of the medical profession, thereby reducing the number of Filipinos opting for a career in medicine or nursing. In the long run, this will reduce the supply of healthcare workers in the country, and we will be faced with problems graver than what we are facing now.

—DANNY OTANES,
danny_otanes@yahoo.com

Can't grasp the nays to Cha-cha

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY people are afraid of Charter change. It offers the best opportunity for us to install the best and the brightest Filipino as our eternal leader.

In fact, instead of shifting to a parliamentary form of government, why don't we just become a monarchy, with Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the queen—or the empress, if you will. This will fulfill the dreams of Apo Marcos about a Philippine Maharlika. This will also bring us back to the glorious years of kings and queens, of France's Marie Antoniette, of Russia's czars and czarinas during the Romanov dynasty.

Then we can grant the poor royal titles so that their lives will be uplifted. We can call them knights or dukes or duchesses and their shanties will be referred to as castles or manors. This way Charter change can solve the poverty of our people.

Another reason for us to support Cha-cha is that it has the support of GMA who talks to the "Lord" as she talked to Pope John Paul before he died. GMA is the Philippines' Joan of Arc. By giving us GMA and her knights of traditional politicians, the Lord shows that he loves Filipinos. GMA is the will of the Lord. Nobody should contest the will of the Lord.

So everyone should support Cha-cha. It's our only salvation from all our problems. It's the bullet that a man with brain cancer needs in his head.

GMA said so. Has she lied to us before?

—DENNIS L. REYES,
3322 Sonoma St.,
Torrance, Ca 90503 USA

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LETTERS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Water here and there

MAY I AGAIN CALL THE ATTENTION of the public to the "water problem" in our country. I am sure many Filipinos, to this day, don't enjoy the amenity that a modern water system provides, meaning, they have to go elsewhere to fetch water for use at home, or pay someone else to do the chore for them. Meanwhile, our government remains preoccupied with political bickerings; the Maynilad-MWSS deal has turned out to be a complete mess; and the country is still without a comprehensive plan for pipeline delivery of water to all Filipino homes and for ensuring water quality and safety. Meanwhile, customers complain of poor water service and high water rates.

Simply put, if the population grows, so does water consumption. Is the government doing something about this? Here in the Middle East, there are desalination plants and water is classified into two major types—raw and sweet. The gulf countries spend more money for treating water than for building government infrastructure. Water here is a commodity more expensive than gasoline.

We are fortunate that nature has blessed our country with an abundance of water. Let us do our share in saving water. Let us not waste water.

—RICCI SANTIAGO,
signorelli@coolcare.com.sa

Now among the poorest of the poor

IN THE MIDDLE OF LAST YEAR, Meralco asked me in a letter to submit all papers and documents necessary for a reimbursement of more than P44,000 that it overcharged me.

Although I could not see the logic behind Meralco's request, I fully complied with it. But until now, I have not received any reimbursement.

The quality of my life has been degraded considerably as I had to defer my purchase of basic commodities, especially medicine, just to pay my Meralco bills.

I'm a 60-year-old simple Juana de la Cruz reduced to the status of the poorest of the poor.

—VIOLETA O. REYES,
55 Annapolis St.,
Greenhills, San Juan,
Metro Manila

Is it proper for GMA to stay on?

IF PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo and her loyal cabinet believe that they will succeed in pushing their version of constitutional change through people's initiative, I suggest they think again. Numerous legal infirmities and obstacles, not to mention the time constraints, would make it impossible for the nation to achieve well-advised changes. And considering that 65 percent of the population is in favor of the President's immediate resignation, the growing unrest in the military, and the masses' growing frustrations, I fear that more serious things could befall our country.

The people's initiative is GMA's only choice for as long as the Senate and her administration can't see eye-to-eye on a Constitutional Convention and Constitutional Assembly.

Charter change will principally benefit GMA. She wants Charter change so that a parliamentary system of government can be installed, thus providing her a way of eluding future impeachment moves and enabling her to survive the scandals wracking her administration.

Lastly, may I again ask? Is it pardonable for a president, after she has been caught lying, to say "I am sorry" and then to forget the whole thing and continue with her lies?

—ARTURO M. TOPACIO JR.,
spokesman,
Office of Sen. Alfredo Lim,
GSIS Building, Pasay City

An excellent police officer

POLICE CHIEF SUPERINTENdent Jesus Versoza's promotion to the rank of director is well-deserved. (PDI, 4/12/06) Versoza was instrumental in the dismantling of that big drug ring that included Jolly Ong.

In the early 1990s, Versoza and other PNP operatives were called to a Senate inquiry regarding a raid they conducted without a proper warrant. The raid led to the arrest of some drug traffickers linked to Jolly Ong. I remember Versoza being grilled then and he confidently answered that the raid was done while in "hot pursuit" of one of their quarries. The Senate investigators would discover that the drug lords tried to bribe Versoza and his men but they turned it down even though it turned out that some of their superiors were already in the pocket of Jolly Ong.

Drilon and the NBI later cornered the name-dropping Jolly Ong by digging up a long-forgotten arrest order. Ong turned out to have bribed his way out of jail despite a court conviction for estafa. You can check that in past INQUIRER reports.

Versoza's stint as PNP chief in Baguio also resulted in the dismantling of a drug ring and the elimination of some major drug traffickers. Versoza's role in the escape of Al-Ghozi could be part of a bigger play. There are those who say the Al-Ghozi affair was a gambit and that someone had to take the fall if it failed, and Versoza happened to be that someone. INQUIRER's investigative reporters could dig into this.

But my main point is, I'm glad Versoza is being rewarded for doing an excellent job as a police officer.

—CRISPIN SALVOSA,
crisalvosa@gmail.com

Teaching values by example

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE commentary "Ambivalence," by James Ong. (PDI, 4/10/06) The people's right in a democracy is not for Ong to waive. His comfortable life in a status quo is his business. It is not part of our agenda to please him and to protect him from his fears of losing what he enjoys under this regime without a mandate. It is no news that the Lord said, it is difficult for a rich man to go to heaven. Yes, the "eye of the needle" has nothing to do with sewing.

We want Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to honor the people's rights. When somebody says, she's sorry, and she really means it, she should show good faith by restitution. A handshake between the errant and a mere observer who thinks he has forgiven, without regard to the rights of the truly aggrieved, does not a whole make. I think my employer, a non-Catholic Christian college, will not hesitate to fire me should I teach my students to espouse values that are diametrically opposed to the Lord's teachings.

For instance: Plagiarism here is a cause for expulsion. Would you encourage students to attempt it? And if they did plagiarize or cheated, would you oppose their facing the consequences of such action?

Or, does Ong have one standard for his students and another for Ms Arroyo and her minions? If he does, I believe he should resign from De La Salle University.

I was once a faculty member at another campus of DLSU. There is nothing like teaching by example. If anyone of us would say that we teach our disciplines or professions without regard to values, as an accountant, I'd say, Enron, Sunbeam, Arthur Andersen. Need I say more?

—AURORA RIEL,
aurora_riel@yahoo.com

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Tuesday, April 25, 2006

Kaya nila... Ikaw kaya, kaya mo?
ULTIMATE GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS
Mamayang Gabi Na! 8:30 PM
ABC Tayo!
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)	National Geographic	Premier Snooker League				Sento	Mumbai Thrillers	TNA Impact		Guinness Book Of Record		Big News	Next Action Star		ALI	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Twins	TV Patrol World		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Panday	Wonderful Life		Nagmamahal, Kapamilya			Insider
AXN		Lost (Season II)		House		Sports Disaster VI		Sakura Wars	Sakura Wars	PSI Factor (Season III)		The Amazing Race (Season IX)		Alias (Season IV)		CSI: NY (Season 2)		Rescue Me	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door				Power Rangers Wild Force		Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel				Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Halimaw Sa Banga				Bakit Di Totohanin				Ikaw Ang Mahal Ko		Otso-Otso Pamela-Mela Wan				Minsan Lamang Magmahal			
Cinemax				Born Yesterday			The Blues Brothers					2 Fast 2 Furious			Boa Vs. Python (9:45 PM)			Wild Things 2: The Glades	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Body Of Evidence	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Surface		Prison Break		Law & Order: Criminal Intent	
Discovery Channel		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Rides		Great Quakes		Blueprint For Disaster		Wild Discovery		Hour Asia		Zero Hour		Blueprint For Disaster		Crime Stories	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Unlakative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven That's So Trendy Week	Wonderful World Of Disney			Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Phil Of The Future	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '05 Men's 9-Ball Challenge of Champions		Pool World Pool Masters 2001		X-Games Files '04		Watersports Programming Hot Water		Atlantic Coast Conf. Basketball: N. Carolina Vs Duke				Sportscenter Asia	Pro Billiards '05 Swiss Billiards C'ships		Pro Billiards '05 Swiss Billiards C'ships		Sportscenter Asia
ETC	Insider Weekend	Project Runway		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		One Tree Hill 3		The O.C. 2		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Blowout 2		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Super Saints	Angelus (3:15 PM)	ABCatholic	Angel Force	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Mirror Of The Soul	Lord, Have Mercy	Behold the Man: Spirituality for Men	The Journey Home Encore		Daily Mass Live		Angelus (9:15 PM)	The Good Code The Natural Law	Cenacle Of Divine Mercy	Octavia Dies	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royal Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Majika	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Jewel In The Palace		Bahay Mo Ba 'To			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters IV		Straight From The Heart				Bewitched	The Nanny	Family Law III		Missing II		Judging Amy		Power & Beauty			Judging Amy (11:45 PM)
HBO		The Enemy Within			Back To The Future			50 First Dates (6:15 PM)				Deadwood 18: Something Very Expensive		Deadwood 19: E.B. Was Left Out		Anaconda (9:55 PM)			Now On The Big Screen In April
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Sorcerer Hunter	Soul Hunters	Lost Universe	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mama do Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Sorcerer Hunter
IBC 13		EZ Shop				[illegible] On The Go	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Home Shopping Network		ME TV		PTA Best Of The Philippines		Global Family Songs	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Raw				The Batman	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV			Arrested Development	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	The Fixi	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Emeril Live		Passion For Dessert	E! News Weekend		Look For Less	Martha		Napa Style	Sheila Bridges Designer Living	Guess Who's Coming To Decorate	
MTV Philippines		Pimp My Ride		Handpicked: Rockbuddy	Pop Inc		2006 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Hits		Get Spotted	Bing	MTV Hits		TRL		Pimp My Ride		Sessions: Rockbuddy	Jams
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX Versions	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Top Of The Pops	Radio MYX	MYX News	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Wild Family Secrets	National Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation		Who's Afraid Of Designer Babies?		Top 5 - About China				About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation: Kid In The Cockpit [illegible] Helicopter Down			
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alap	[illegible]	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Deadly Brothers				[illegible]				Fight Night 5				[illegible]				Ang Kapitbahay
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zorbie	Kokiko Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Irene	Noel	Laugh To Laugh Ang Kulit	My Guardian Alley		News On Q	Sana Muling Makapiling		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9	TV Shopping					Global Window	Arangkada Extra Balita	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	[illegible]		Australia's Next Top Model		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Thrill		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports						Shakey's Volleyball Thai vs. Phil					NBA Action	2006 NBA Playoffs					Sportsdesk	Denmark Open Men's Singles SF	
Sports Plus		Golf Today	Inside the PGA	Ray Ban Celebrity Poker Challenge				World Game		Nopi Tunervision II	Rookie Manual	Ultimate Fighting Championship				Gillette World Cup Preview II	World Poker Tour 2		
Star Movies		Fearless (3:15 PM)			Incident (4:45 PM)					Runaway Jury (6:50 PM)				The Triumph			The Living Daylights		
Star World	Frasier	The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Charmed		The O.C.		North Shore		Seinfeld	Charmed
Studio 23	Bewitched	Naruto				Batman Beyond	Monkey Typhoon	Spirits	TBA	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville (8:20 PM)	Gimme Gals (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Reality World

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TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2006
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
A15

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40 judges, court workers suspended

CANDABA, PAMPANGA—MORE THAN 40 JUDGES and court personnel have been suspended, fined or reprimanded for various offenses since December last year, Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban said here on Sunday.

"We have decided cases against judges and court personnel at a rate of about eight per month or more," he said of the Supreme Court's pace in weeding out corruption and incompetence in the judiciary.

This reform was continuing, with Panganiban saying he wanted to see a judiciary characterized by independence, integrity, industry and intelligence.

"That is our target for the judiciary," he added, pointing out that reforms were being carried out along "Acid," his acronym for addressing the issues of access to justice by the poor, corruption, incompetence and delay in the delivery of justice.

"I'd like to be able to solve these problems, to give priority to the solution of these problems," he said.

A survey on the country's legal system conducted by the Social Weather Stations in August last year showed that 49 percent of 440 lawyers in Metro Manila, Baguio, Cebu and Davao cities said they were "aware" of judges in their localities who were on the take. The SWS said only 8 percent of those lawyers reported the bribery.

During the five-year stint of former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., the Supreme Court had disciplined a number of justices and dismissed 47 judges and one justice.

Davide did this even as more than 30 percent of trial courts in the country remained vacant as of September 2005.

Since replacing Davide in December, Panganiban has adopted reforms that include the creation of five new committees on judiciary development fund, administrative concerns, attaining zero backlog of cases, knowledge-sharing and regional cooperation, and security, according to a Supreme Court report.

Court officials and employees nationwide have received financial benefits ranging from special allowances, fringe benefits, cost-of-living allowances, emergency economic assistance and productivity bonus.

The judicial philosophy of protecting liberty and nurturing prosperity were upheld in decisions that included shooting down the increase in generation charge by the Manila Electric Co., ordering the Government Service Insurance System to refund to its retirees all deductions made from their retirement benefits and upholding the right of the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. to be paid P300 billion before the government could take over the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 3. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

HINDI AKO GANYAN KA MAHAL!

BIR exec fears kidnap over tag he's worth ₱20M

COTABATO CITY—A REGIONAL REVENUE official fears for his life as he might be kidnapped after the Department of Finance Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS) declared him worth P20 million.

He cried foul on allegations that he enriched himself while working at the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Lawyer Mama Marzoc, director of the regional office of the BIR here, said he was surprised after learning he was that rich before the eyes of the RIPS.

"I fear for my life and my family and my children, they might be kidnapped because the newspapers say I am worth P20 million," he said.

"I admit that I have (pieces of) real (estate) properties but these would not go beyond P2.8 million as stated in my statement of assets and liabilities," Marzoc told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

"I don't have a house in Barrio Kakar, Cotabato City," Marzoc, who has been in government service for 39 years, added.

"I told my wife, after reading the news, that we should go to Kakar because we have a house there, according to RIPS. If anyone could find a mansion in Kakar owned by me then they can claim and assume ownership over it," he said.

Marzoc's wife works with the National Food Authority.

He stressed that his house in Marawi City was owned by his parents and contributed to its renovation, along with his brothers who are engineers and doctors and another brother working in Saudi Arabia.

"I consider this trial by publicity, my side was not aired" he said, adding that he has one and only wife.

Some report says he has many wives. "My wife is a Christian and an Ilongga, she would not allow me to marry more than her."

Admitting he owns an apartment, Marzoc said it was loaned from the Government Service Insurance System and he has all the records needed to prove his innocence of the charges filed against him at the Office of the Ombudsman.

"I have not received copies of the complaint yet," he said.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Cebu bus rates up ₱1 on May 1

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—STARTING MAY 1, BUS FARES in Cebu will increase by P1 per kilometer.

The Cebu Provincial Bus Operators Association (CPBOA) will implement the P1 per km fare hike to offset the series of increases in the prices of gasoline and diesel, according to CPBOA president Nick Villahermosa.

Villahermosa said they would no longer need to petition the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) for the increase since they never implemented the P1.10 per km fare increase approved last year by the LTFRB.

The militant transport group Nagkahiusang Draybers sa Sugbo (Nadsu), which is composed of about 7,000 jeepney operators and drivers, will, however, file a petition at the LTFRB for a fare increase.

LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK

It's time to move forward

OPINION ON THE STATEMENT:
"The members of the opposition against President Arroyo should start helping to improve the country and stop too much politics"

AGREE: 58%
UNDECIDED: 24%
DISAGREE: 15%

* Don't know and refused to answer not shown

* First Quarter Social Weather Report
March 8-14, 2006 National Survey

THE SURVEY SAYS majority of Filipinos believe that the opposition should stop excessive politics and start helping the country move forward.

"Their (the people's) most immediate concern and urgent priority is their daily struggle to earn a livelihood...They are seriously concerned that in 2006 we shall repeat the chaotic politics we all suffered in 2005" **CBCP January 29, 2006**

OPINION ON THE STATEMENT:
"Whatever happened in the elections is over and it is time to move on and let the President focus on the real problems of the nation"

AGREE: 51%
UNDECIDED: 24%
DISAGREE: 23%

* Don't know and refused to answer not shown

* First Quarter Social Weather Report
March 8-14, 2006 National Survey

THE SURVEY SAYS majority of Filipinos believe that we should leave election issues behind, MOVE ON, and let the President address the nation's problems.

"We did not see enough anomalies at the national level to have a material effect in the national results" **NAMFREL May 2004**

Magtulungan tayo. Kaunlaran muna.

PIA
Philippine Information Agency

SC woes on reforms: Budget, judges lack

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE SUPREME COURT IS DEtermined to reform the judiciary to improve the delivery of justice but its programs are hampered by budget constraints and vacancies in various judicial positions, a justice said here on Monday.

Associate Justice Leonardo Quisumbing said the court's human and resource problems had adversely affected its institutional, administrative and justice delivery measures.

The Supreme Court started in 2000 a program for judicial reforms aimed at providing a speedier and efficient judicial system.

"The judiciary's budget is less than 1 percent of the national budget," Quisumbing told reporters attending a seminar on the country's judicial system at the Baguio Country Club.

"We hope that the budget will increase to 2 or reach 3 percent of the national budget," he said.

Records from the High Court's program management office showed that the judiciary's budget had been declining for the last five years.

In 2004 and 2005, the courts received only 0.88 percent of the national budget compared to close to 40 percent of the Executive department.

Translated into per-capita share, the figures indicated that the government had been investing less on the judicial department.

Court records showed 2,258 judicial positions in the Supreme Court down to the municipal trial courts, including the shari'a courts for Muslims. Only 1,583 had been filled up, creating a need for 665 judges more or a vacancy rate of 29 percent.

The 1,583 judges and justices serve 82.7 million Filipinos, or a ratio of one judge for every 54,587 Filipinos, the records said.

DENNIS JAY SANTOS/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

YOUNG FACES
Thousands of Christian youth converged recently in Davao City for the Youth for Christ International leaders' convention. Part of the convention was the performance of these young men and women with painted faces and bodies.

LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK

We are winning the war against corruption

PERCENTAGE OF COMPANIES THAT WERE ASKED FOR BRIBES for government transactions

Social Weather Stations Surveys	2000 NCR	2001 NCR	2002/2003 NCR	2003/2004 NCR+C/D	2005 NCR+4 areas
Local Govt. Permits or Licences	55	54	50	41	36
Payment of Income Taxes	52	50	43	39	30
Nat'l Govt. Permits or License	42	34	37	28	28
No Bribes Asked	21	20	26	30	39

In 2005, fewer companies were asked for bribes to facilitate transactions. This is a clear indication that corruption is declining.

OMBUDSMAN CONVICTION RATE AT THE SANDIGANBAYAN

YEAR	Terminated after trial	Disposed cases resulting in conviction	Percent convicted
2001	265	42	16
2002	283	87	31
2003	310	39	13
2004	195	45	23
2005	140	46	33

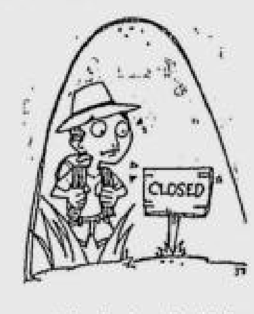
In 2005, 33% of cases decided in the Sandiganbayan were won by the Ombudsman. Only 16% were won in 2001. This reflects gains in the war against corruption.

Magtulungan tayo. Kaunlaran muna.

PIA
Philippine Information Agency

ROUNDUP

Halcon climb moratorium



CITY OF CALAPAN—A five-year moratorium in climbing Mt. Halcon is being observed after Barangay Dulangan, a Mangyan community, passed a resolution in March for the purpose. Hundreds of mountaineers used to climb Halcon, the third highest peak in the country, especially during the Holy Week. Only two foreigners, assisted by a Mangyan, have been reported to have violated the moratorium, according to Karen Ignacio, provincial officer of the National Commission on Indigenous People.

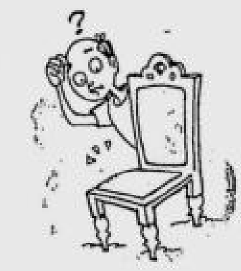
Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Community archeology

BULALACAO, Oriental Mindoro—The archeology studies program of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City is conducting an excavation in Barangay Carataw, 3 km from the town proper, up to May 8 to determine whether what people here believe to be a Church (called Simbahang Bato) was really a place of worship. The research is being conducted by Dr. Paz Victor and 18 students and staff members.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Village exec suspended



ROXAS CITY—The president of the Association of Barangay Councils of Sigma town in Capiz was suspended for habitual absenteeism during the weekly municipal council sessions. The municipal council suspended Christopher Andaya for a month without pay in March, said Vice Mayor Lemuel de Pedro. De Pedro, the council's presiding officer, said Andaya, who represents the barangay association in the town council, attended only four sessions last year and was absent since January. He said Andaya, the barangay chair of Poblacion Sur and ironically the head of the town council's committee on good government, did not file any leave of absence.

Felipe Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau

Jeep with hot logs stopped

LEGAZPI CITY—A jeep marked "Two Brothers" and carrying 115 logs worth at least P18,000 was seized by police on Friday while on its way from Barangay Matanglad to Barangay Calachuche in Milagros, Masbate. The driver of the jeep was identified as Arturo Arado, 37, while the alleged owner of the logs was identified only as Renato Blanca, of Barangay Matanglad.

Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

NPA mission: More guns

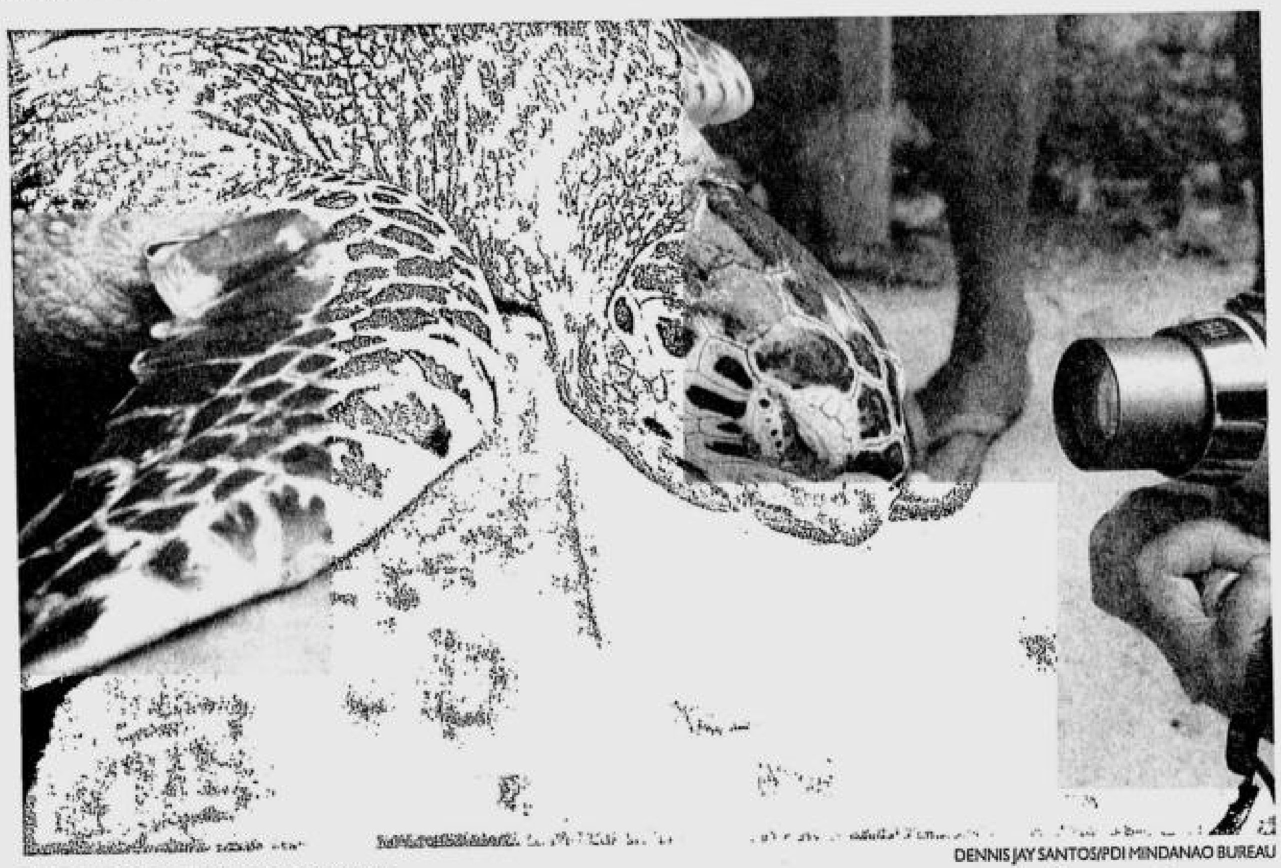
LUCENA CITY—Communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal congratulated New People's Army rebels who raided the outpost of government militiamen in Obando, Bulacan on Friday and seized at least 17 high-powered weapons and ammunitions. "Their successful offensive against the enemy was one shining example for all the Red fighters to emulate across the country," Rosal said in a mobile phone interview. He urged all communist rebels to step up attacks and collect more firearms for the resource-depleted guerrilla movement.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Calabarzon inflation up

LIPA CITY—The inflation rate, or the rate of increase in prices of goods and services, in the Calabarzon region was higher in March compared to the previous month's level as it reached 7 percent, data from the National Statistics Office regional office said. Rizal recorded the highest inflation rate in March at 10 percent, while Cavite had the lowest at 4.7 percent. The NSO saw the country's economic policies, particularly the imposition of the expanded value-added tax, as influential to the March inflation increases.

Marlon Alexander Luistro, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



DENNIS JAY SANTOS/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL
A hawksbill turtle clambers up a concrete divider, drawing close to a photographer's camera in Punta Dumalag, a coastal village in Davao City that is promoting a program to protect the endangered turtle species.

Negros farmer leader executed in his home

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—ANOTHER LEADER OF A farmers' group was killed, this time in Barangay Camansi in Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental, by three unidentified armed men on Saturday.

The slaying came exactly a week after a community organizer of the Task Force Mapalad was gunned down in Silay City, Negros Occidental.

The latest victim was identified as Porferio Maglasang, a father of eight and chair of the Pambansang Katipunan ng Makabayang Magbubukid (PKMM) chapter in Kabankalan.

Supt. Roderick Alba, Kabankalan police chief, yesterday said Maglasang was forcibly taken from his house and shot in his backyard in Sitio Caraan, Barangay Camansi.

Alba said Maglasang died of multiple bullet wounds in different parts of the body.

The Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya-Negros, in a statement, condemned the killing of the PKMM leader.

It said Maglasang was a victim of extrajudicial killings sanctioned by the military here and demanded an investigation by authorities.

It asked the local government units in the province to put a stop to the series of human rights violations.

Police have also yet to establish the identities of the gunmen who killed TFM leader Rico Adeva in Silay.

Adeva, 39, was shot on April 16 by four men in Barangay Bagtic. He had multiple bullet wounds—four in the head and one each in the abdomen, right side of the chest, mouth and left ear, waist and right hand.

GenSan dads say peace ad hurting city

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—THE CITY COUNCIL passed a resolution urging the Department of Tourism to help investigate the origin of an advertisement titled "Call for Peace" being aired in major TV and radio stations in the country and published in newspapers here.

The resolution, unanimously approved by the council, assailed the ad campaign, claiming it was destroying the image of the city.

An excerpt of the ad said, "Precious (Galo) collected lots of happy memories. However, terrorists wrote off this young girl's life when they bombed the General Santos market in December 2004. Fourteen were killed, including Precious. Help fight terrorism. Call for Peace, dial 117 or 1800107392737 or contact your barangay representative. All identities will remain confidential."

Councilor Ramon Milleza said the advertiser should immediately pull out the ad and rephrase it so as not to put the city in a bad light.

Milleza added that the intention of the peace campaign might be noble but the advertiser should have been sensitive to the feelings of the blast victims.

"Why single out General Santos in the ad campaign when several other areas in the country have also experienced a series of bomb attacks?" Milleza asked.

Councilor Shirlyn Nograles, chair of the council tourism committee, said she understood that the ad campaign was meant to motivate people to be vigilant against terror attacks.

Nograles said the advertiser should have reviewed the text of the ad to ensure it was not damaging to any place.

Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. said he called up the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process to find out where the peace ad came from.

But Acharon said even the OPAPP was not aware who prepared and paid for the ad.

Jesus Dureza, presidential assistant for Mindanao, said his office had nothing to do with it.

Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

10 rebs attacking militia base slain

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—TEN REBELS AND A PARAmilitary man were killed while three others were injured when communist guerrillas stormed a government militia base in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental on Saturday.

Col. Jerry Jalandoni, commander of the 303rd Infantry Brigade based on Negros Island, said soldiers found the bodies of two rebels but knew that at least 10 died among some 30 New People's Army members who raided a detachment of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) in Barangay Villegas.

The number of fatalities could not be independently verified as of yesterday.

Jalandoni identified the bodies recovered as those of Demetrio Cornelio and Ruben Rabor.

He said the other dead rebels were loaded in carabao-drawn carts by their comrades. The group was sighted in Barangay Trinidad, also in Guihulngan.

Also killed in the two-hour battle were Cafgu member Raniel Garsis. Another member Ricardo Salapas was slightly wounded.

Two wounded rebels, identified only as Ranila and Alfredo Malig-on, were brought to the Villegas District Hospital in Guihulngan.

The military said the militiamen were outnumbered but were able to put up a good fight.

The Army said the attack could be an attempt to avenge NPA losses suffered during a March 31 encounter in Isabela town near Guihulngan, where government forces overran a guerrilla training camp.

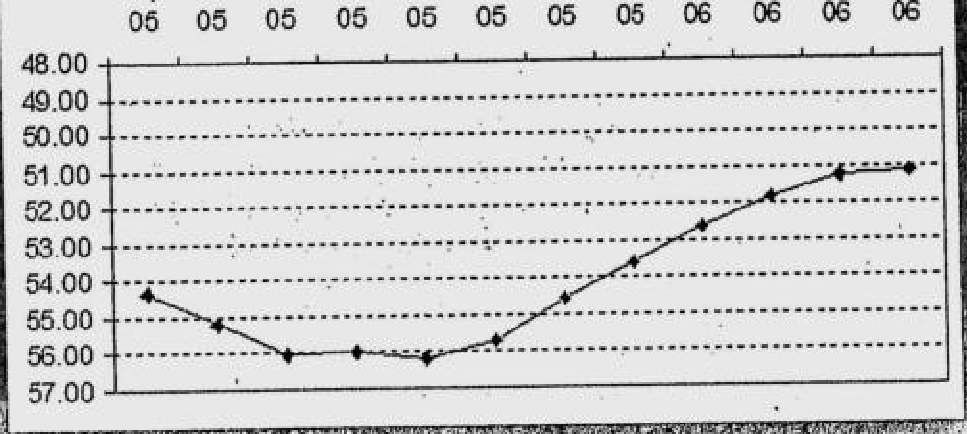
LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK
Our economy is on the upswing

MAKATI BUSINESS CLUB SURVEY - JAN. 2006
Respondents who expect growth in:

ECONOMY	48%
INVESTMENT	62%
EXPORTS	50%

"This economy is worth investing in" - Makati Business Club

DRAMATIC GAINS OF THE PESO AGAINST THE DOLLAR



ECONOMIC GAINS :

✓ Foreign direct investments in 2005 grew by more than 65% compared to year-ago levels. Philippine Export Zone Authority (PEZA) investments alone grew to P68 Billion from P50 billion in 2004. PEZA investments are expected to generate over 70,000 jobs
✓ Balance Of Payments (BOP) surplus posted at $2.03 Billion in the first two months of the year, three times higher than the same period last year
✓ International financial institutions such as ING Bank, UBS AG, Goldman Sachs remain bullish on the Peso projecting further increase in its value
✓ UK-based Fitch and US-based Standard & Poor upgraded their credit risk ratings of the Philippines from "negative" to "stable"
✓ The World Bank, Merril-Lynch, Bear Stearns & Co. and ABN-AMRO retain positive growth outlooks for the country forecasting economic growth of between 5.4% and 6% this year
✓ United Nations awarded the Philippines as the best implementor of microfinancing besting 160 other countries
✓ OFW remittances increased to $1.8 Billion in the first two months of 2006, higher by 14% compared to year-ago levels. This continues to pump-prime the economy and provide a better quality of life for OFW families
✓ Jan. to March 2006 budget deficit is P4.2 Billion below ceiling
✓ Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) jobs, like call center agents, increased by 63% in 2005 from year-ago levels to about 162,250 jobs
✓ The President's job generation program is nearly half-way to its goal of 10 million jobs by year 2010. As of Dec. 2005, 4.9 million jobs have been generated

Magtulungan tayo. Kaunlaran muna.
PIA
Philippine Information Agency

MILF dismantled terror camps, PNP claims

THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION Front, the country's largest Muslim rebel group, had been dismantling camps for foreign militants since 2004 when peace talks moved forward, the Philippine National Police said yesterday.

Senior Supt. Romeo Ricardo, head of the Philippine National Police antiterrorism task force, said there were also signs that members of the al-Qaida-linked regional network Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) had been forced to work with the smaller home-grown-group, the Abu Sayyaf.

Ricardo said intelligence officials believed one camp called Jabal Quba set up in Mindanao no longer existed, adding that JI members staying there were forced to move by the MILF.

"There is no ongoing training at the moment," he told a forum of foreign journalists.

Ricardo also disclosed that about 40 mostly Indonesian Muslim militants on the run in Mindanao had been struggling to recover from battlefield setbacks and raise funds for new terror attacks.

The militants—including two key suspects in the 2002 nightclub bombings that killed 202 people on Indonesia's Bali island—had continued to plot new attacks from MILF rebel camps after surviving US-backed military offensives in recent years, Ricardo said.

The Bali attacks were blamed on the JI, which aims to establish a fundamentalist Islamic theocracy in Southeast Asia.

"Day and night, they just plan and plan," said Ricardo. "But with funding problems, their capability to strike at this time is questionable."

Ricardo said the MILF rebels appeared to be "very sincere" in cooperating with the government in isolating foreign militants, mostly Indonesians, Malaysians and a few Singaporeans.

Informal peace talks between the MILF and the government appear to be in the final stages to try to end a nearly 40-year separatist conflict that has killed more than 120,000 people and hampered development of the resource-rich but impoverished South.

The two sides are due to hold another round of talks, hosted by Malaysia, on ancestral rights for Muslims in the first week of May.

On Friday, a Singapore-based security analyst said foreign militants continued to train at MILF bases deep in the mountains of Mindanao, disputing claims by the rebels that they had cut off ties with the terror groups al-Qaida and JI.

"The MILF has constantly lied that it is not harboring JI," said Rohan Gunaratna, head of the political violence and terrorism center at Singapore's Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies.

The PNP, citing intelligence reports, said about 40 suspected JI members remained in the South but there was no proof they were seeking refuge in MILF camps.

Ricardo said hundreds of foreign militants, including those from the Middle East, trained from 1994 until 2004 in camps set up by the MILF near its stronghold in central Mindanao.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao said many of the militants may have decided to stay in Mindanao to take advantage of the ceasefire between the government and the MILF.

Among suspected al-Qaida operatives who visited the camps were Dhiren Barot, an Indian-born Briton arrested in London in 2004 and French-Algerian Abdusalam Bolanoure, caught at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in 1999, Ricardo said.

The PNP says it has arrested nearly 250 foreign and home-grown militants since 2002, after the MILF agreed to help security forces isolate terrorist cells on Mindanao.

Among those arrested were four Indonesians, including the suspected head of Lashkar Jundullah, a group based in eastern Indonesia that has been involved in communal violence. *Reuters, AP*

Solo climber nixed joining Everest team, says leader

By Alcuin Papa

THE TEAM ATTEMPTING TO PLANT THE Philippine flag on the peak of Mt. Everest, the tallest mountain in the world, said maverick climber Romi Garduce, who is also bidding to be the first Filipino on the mountain's summit, had refused an invitation to join the expedition.

Butch Sebastian, co-leader of the team, told the INQUIRER Sunday night that Garduce turned down the offer when the idea of assembling an expedition was first brought up in 2003.

"He declined for whatever reason. I don't know whether he had his own schedule then. But he knew our schedule. I don't want to presume anything," said Sebastian, himself a veteran climber who has been to the Everest Base Camp.

Sebastian said that a climber could join the team on the condition that he commit himself to the team's three-year training schedule, with no assurance at all that the team would conquer Everest.

People close to Garduce, an Information technology specialist when not mountaineering, told the INQUIRER that the climber "did not have the luxury of quitting his job" while training with the team.

Own timetable

"He needed a job to be able to continue doing what he wants to do. Also, he had his own timetable," one friend of Garduce's said, asking for anonymity.

Sebastian said the team trained in alpine-climbing schools in India and New Zealand, and climbed the China-Pakistan range where team members led by Leo Oracion and Erwin "Pastor" Emata managed to summit Mt. Muztagh-Ata (24,758 feet) last year and set the record for the highest altitude reached by a Filipino.

The record was broken later when Garduce conquered Mt. Cho-Oyu (26,906 feet), the sixth-highest mountain in the world.

When asked what led to the decision to send the expedition's two strongest climbers, Oracion and Emata, on a "reconnaissance climb" up Everest this year, Sebastian said Leo and Pastor "were already ready."

Network war

"If they can do it (summit Everest) this year, it will make it easier to lead the expedition next year. It has nothing to do with Garduce," said Sebastian. The team was originally scheduled to make an attempt on Everest in 2007.

The decision sparked a race to the top of Everest between the Philippine team and Garduce, egged on by a "network war" between ABS-CBN, which is supporting the Philippine team, and GMA-7, which is supporting Garduce.

Sebastian seemed unperturbed by the tempest swirling around the race, the team and the whole mountaineering community.

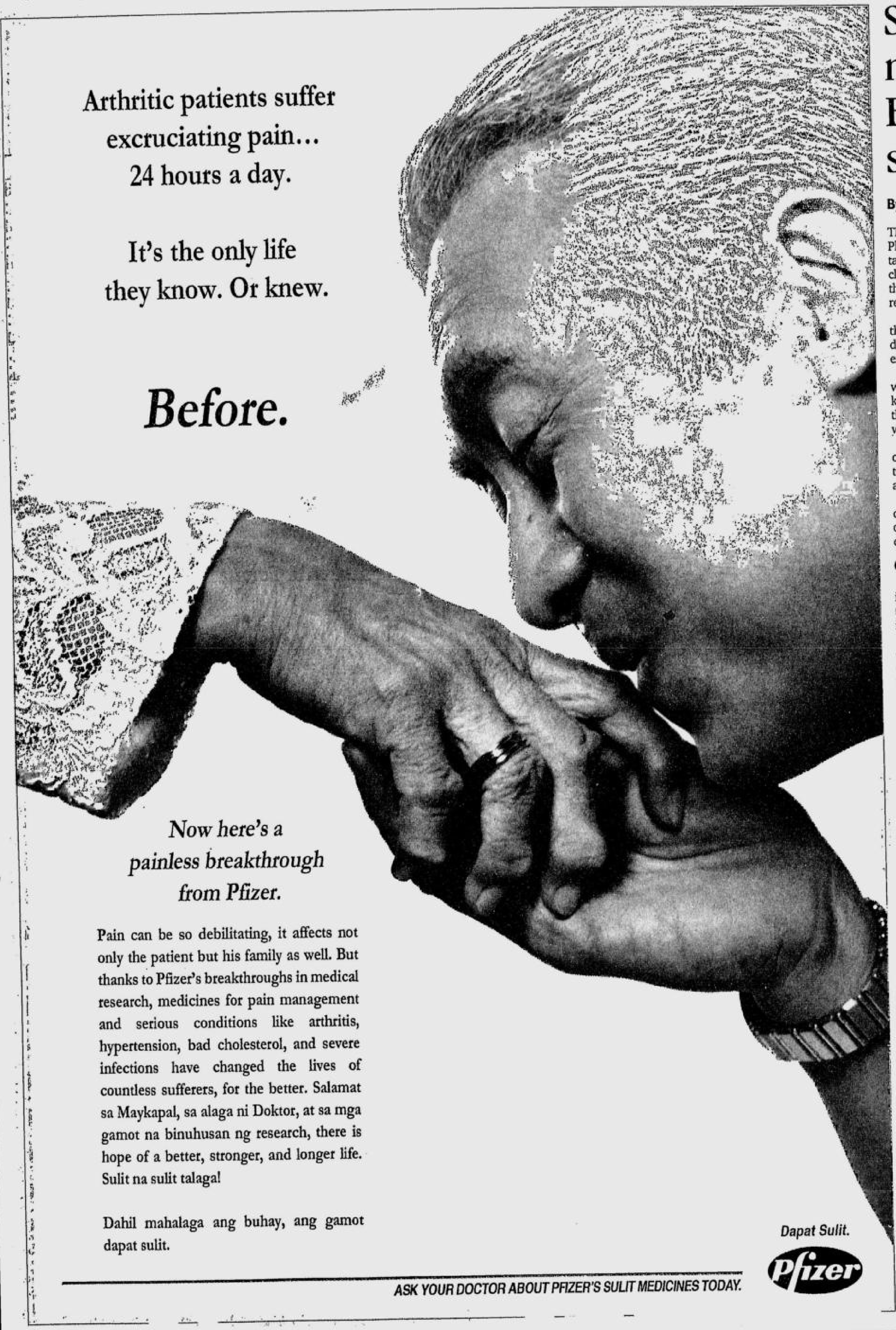
"Obviously, we want it to be one of our guys. But if they can't make it and Garduce is able to summit, that's OK with us. Of course, it will affect our logistics for next year's attempt," he said.

But Sebastian said a rivalry was evident.

"Let's not deny it, it is a race. Who are we fooling? The competition hardly matters to you and me down here, but to the three of them it matters a lot. After all, a successful climb will be their own personal achievement," he said.

Sebastian also commented that the "network war" might have increased the danger to the climbers.

"The danger is already there regardless of the network war, unless they are silly enough to take unnecessary risks by letting themselves be affected by all the media hype. I hope they don't do anything dangerous. Among us mountaineers, you wouldn't wish anything bad happening to any climber."



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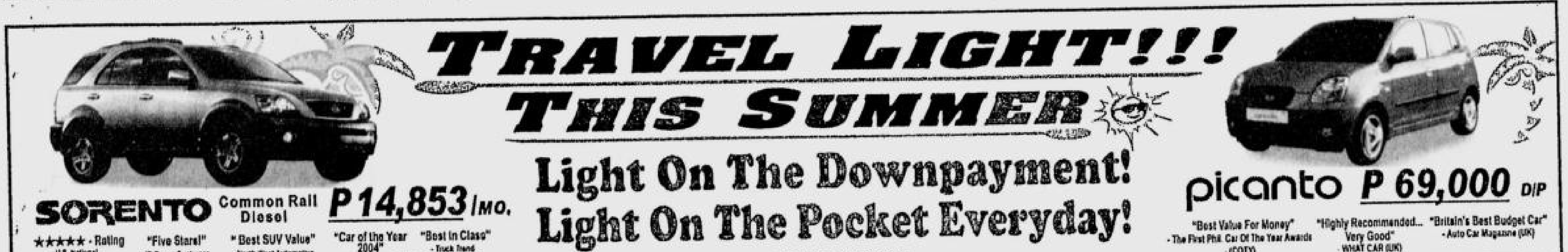

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Light On The Downpayment! Light On The Pocket Everyday!

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SUBJECT TO BANK APPROVAL

picanto P 69,000 D/P

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12 Pasig firms on environment watch list

Water, air pollution violations eyed by monitoring team

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TWELVE MORE FACTORIES ARE ON THE watch list of the Pasig City Environment and Natural Resources Office for possible violation of antipollution regulations.

"We are closely monitoring 12 chemical, textile and food factories for violations of environment ordinances affecting water and air pollution," Cenro chief Raquel Naciongayo told the INQUIRER yesterday.

She did not name the companies as the monitoring and evaluation of their operations were still ongoing. There are 579 big manufacturing plants registered in Pasig City, some of which do not have water treatment facilities, Naciongayo added.

The city government shut down on Thursday a chocolate factory of the Universal Robina Corp. in Barangay Bagong Ilog after residents nearby complained about the "unbearable" stench emitted by the factory. The URC had questioned the move, saying the closure order served on the factory had "no legal basis."

The company said that under the Clean Air Act, only the Department of Environment and Natural Resources secretary, who chairs the Pollution Adjudication Board, could issue closure orders.

Naciongayo, however, said the Local Government Code authorizes local officials to close down establishments that pose an imminent threat to the safety and health of residents. Armed with ladders and an acetylene tank, Cenro and City Legal Office employees stormed the URC plant on Thursday afternoon and padlocked the plant's boiler room, which supplies steam to all manufacturing equipment in the plant.

Cenro officials said the boiler lacked the required antipollution devices. The plant manufactures popular products like Nips Chocolates, Cream-O and Presto Cream.

This is not the first time a URC plant in Pasig City was ordered closed. Last October, the city shut down the URC coffee plant, claiming that the stench had caused dizziness and asthma attacks in some residents in Barangay Rosario. The plant resumed operations after nine days after complying with Cenro recommendations.

Naciongayo said the chocolate factory would only be reopened after the company has complied with the environmental safety requirements.

QC vacant lots to turn green with veggies

By DJ Yap

A "VEGETABLE BASKET" IN THE HEART OF Metro Manila.

An ambitious urban gardening program called "Halamanan sa Bakuran" has been launched in Quezon City for this purpose, using vacant lots and open spaces in the city for the growing of carrots, squash, cabbages and other vegetables.

Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista recently signed a memorandum of agreement in behalf of the city with partner agencies for the project.

Under the program, vegetables as well as medicinal and ornamental plants will be grown in backyards and other open spaces as a source of livelihood for poor families, out-of-school youth, retirees, senior citizens and students.

Chosen as pilot areas for the program were Mapayapa Village in Barangay Pasong Tamo, San Pedro 2 and 3 in Barangay Tandang Sora, and Casanova Drive, Gloria III in Barangay Culiat.

The project is supported by a recently passed resolution directing barangays to clean up and utilize vacant lots and open spaces as sites for livelihood programs, with the consent of lot owners.

The partner agencies include the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture and the Manila Seedling Bank, among others.

The agreement signing coincided with the city's week-long celebration of Earth Day with the theme "Climate Solutions Campaign: Healing Mother Earth."

Other activities lined up by clean environment advocates include tree-planting, free smoke emission-testing, a study tour of the Payatas controlled dump facility, an exhibit, poster-making contests and a rock concert.

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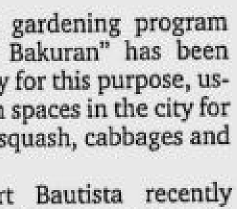
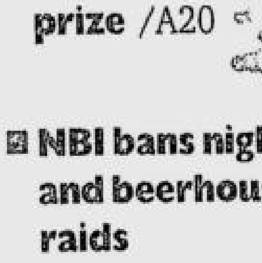
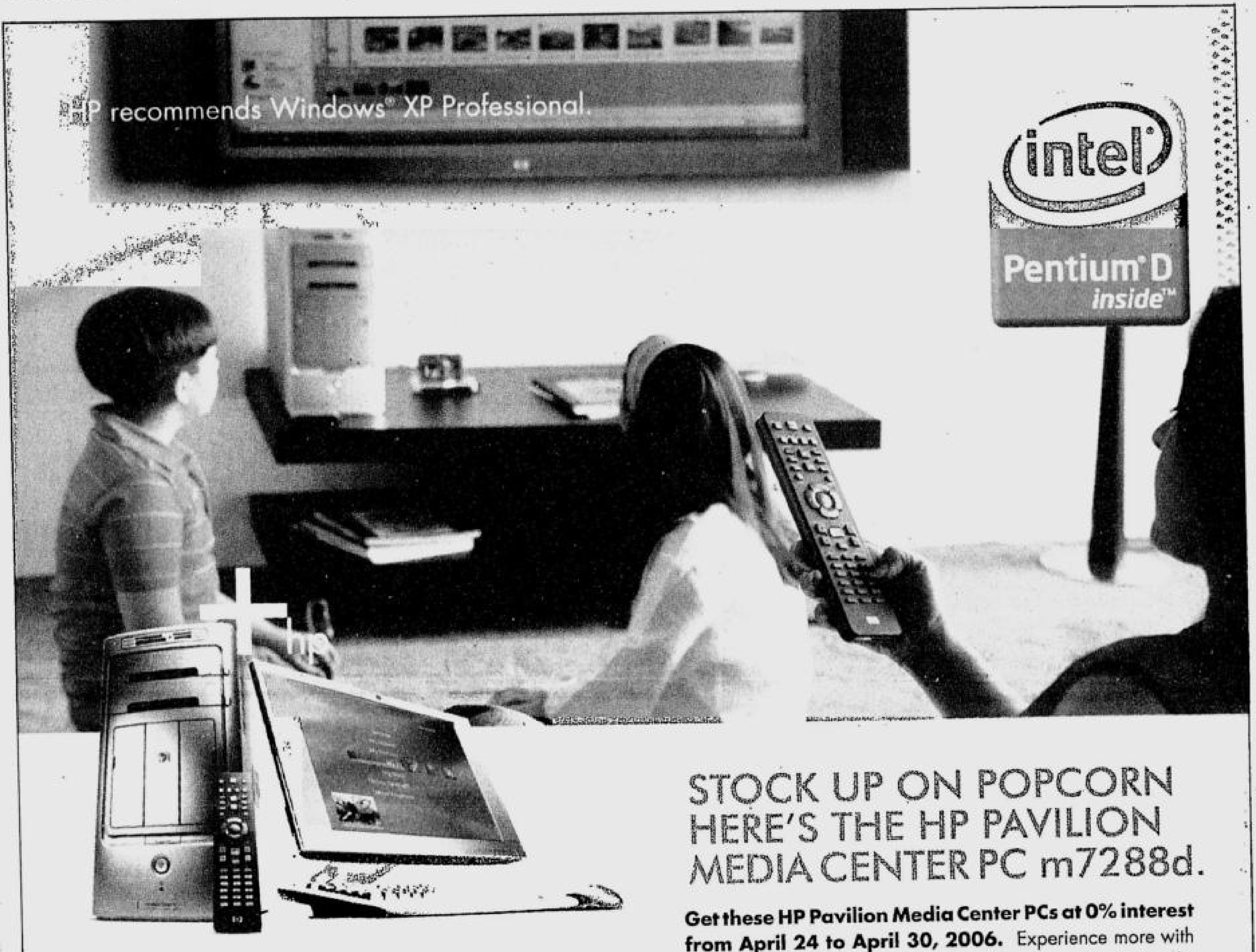
■ NBI bans nightclub and beerhouse raids /A20

■ Cops raid drug den inside Manila cemetery /A20



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Drug den uncovered inside Manila cemetery

House equipped with 3 surveillance cameras; 200 grams of shabu seized

By Margaux C. Ortiz

POLICE RAIDED A HOUSE THAT WAS ALlegedly being used as a drug den inside a Manila cemetery early yesterday morning, and seized P400,000 worth of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu.

Supt. Romulo Sapitula, Manila Police District Station 3 chief, said the suspected house owners—identified only as Boy Zapata and his nephew Bong—were able to escape from the raiders.

"The house was equipped with three surveillance cameras so the two were able to flee before we could enter the area," Sapitula said in a phone interview.

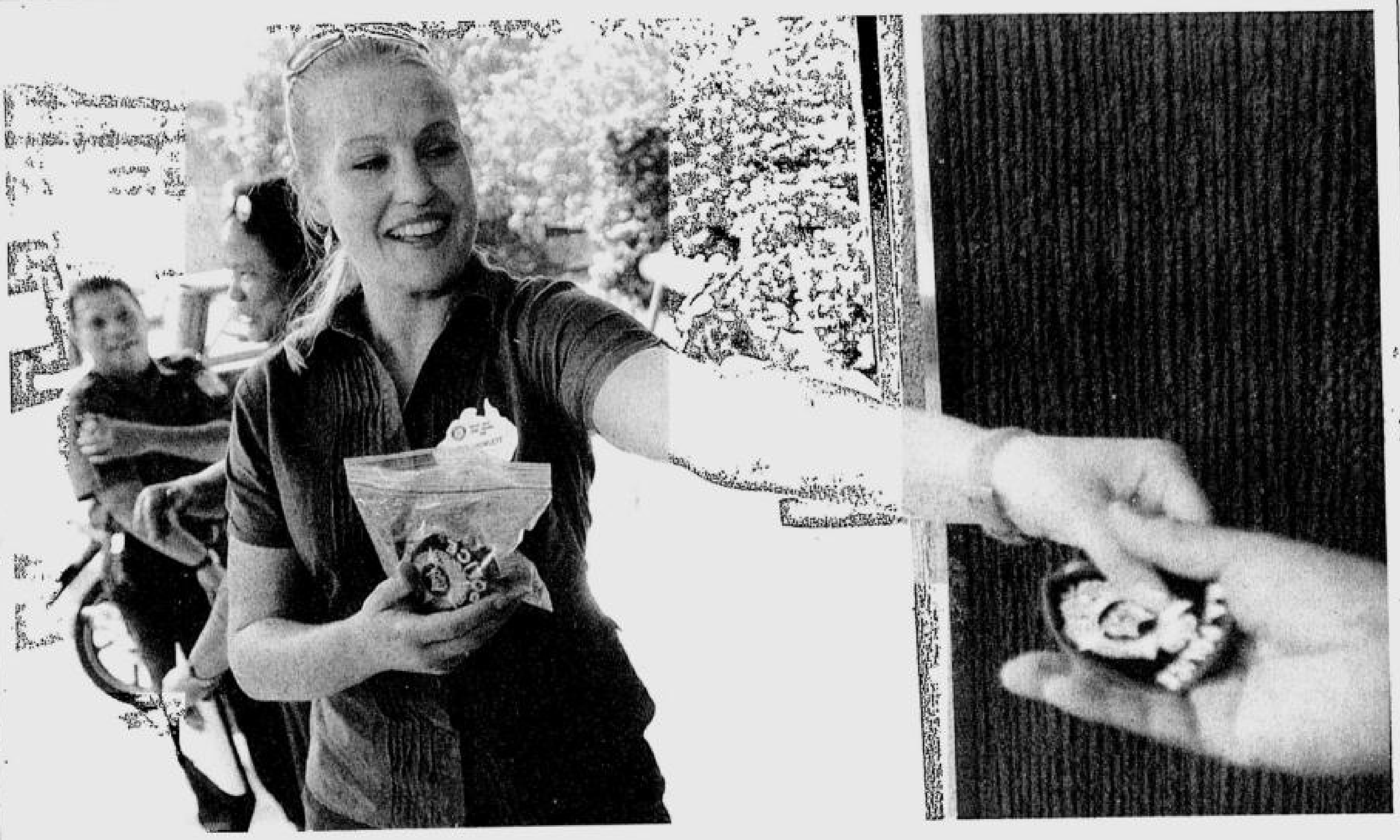
Five other suspects found inside the house on 29th Street, North Cemetery in the Sta. Cruz area, were arrested and will be charged with violation of the Comprehensive Drugs Act of 2002, he added. They were identified as Marissa Ranoco, Rebecca Zapata, Anna May Zapata, Randy Sabado and a 16-year-old girl.

Sapitula said his men were able to seize 200 grams of shabu, with an estimated street value of P2,000 per gram. He added that the police also had to use acetylene torches in breaking down the steel doors of the house.

"It was a well-fortified house, even if it was illegally constructed inside a cemetery," Sapitula said, adding that part of the residence even encroached on a portion of the nearby La Loma Cemetery. The MPD official said that apart from the surveillance cameras, the house was also fully air-conditioned.

MPD operatives had also uncovered a drug den with a similar setup in Quiapo, Manila, late last month. Like the house in Sta. Cruz, the house on Fraternal Street in Quiapo was also equipped with a surveillance camera.

Police seized shabu with an estimated street value of P7.5 million from the two-story house.



MAKING FRIENDS
West Australian Police Constable Sacha Howlet gives a policeman stationed in Kamuning, Quezon City a souvenir. Howlet was a participant in a group study exchange program organized by Rotary International.
RAFFY LERMA

Shame on those school officials!

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

SHAME ON THAT UNIVERSITY AND ITS officials for the shabby treatment President Macapagal-Arroyo got while she was guest at the university's graduation rites!

Even if the guest was not the country's Chief Executive, the school should have taken measures to make their guest feel honored by their graciousness.

To her credit, the President took in stride the heckling she received from one of the graduating students, Maria Theresa Pangilinan, who shouted, "*Patalsikin si* (Oust) Gloria" while unfurling a "No to Cha-cha" banner.

Members of the Presidential Security Group (PSG) who were assigned to accompany GMA to the graduation rites cannot be blamed for the incident. Had they checked thoroughly, that would have been an insult to the hosts, the university officials. The people to be blamed are the university officials.

* * *

The Filipinos allegedly involved in the killings of their compatriots over a lottery racket in Saudi Arabia should not get support from the government. Let them rot in jail or get beheaded for bringing shame to our country.

However, all efforts must be exerted to get the innocent implicated in the killings out of Saudi prisons.

I heard that Saudi prison is the worst place to be in. From accounts of Pinoys who have been jailed in Saudi, many guards are reportedly homosexuals who sodomize prisoners who don't sport beard or moustaches.

* * *

Deo R. Alberca, who introduced himself as vice president of the Chamber of Customs Brokerage Inc. (CCBI)-Cebu, wrote in the Opinion page that I used the power of the pen "blatantly to malign or serve selfish interests."

He said that in reply to my write-up about Cebu Customs Port Collector Lourdes Mangaoang who refuses to vacate her post despite an order from her superiors in Manila transferring her to Iloilo. Alberca is, of course, kowtowing to Mangaoang as he is a broker. My customs sources in Manila and Cebu say Alberca is a broker for notorious rice smugglers in Cebu.

No further comment.

* * *

A book on self-defense is out.

The book, Counter Strike, is meant for the B and C people (as opposed to A, D and E) as they are the most productive social classes in society, says its author, Frenchman John Havan.

'The white-collar classes need a system that is simple, direct and easy to learn. They need to avoid anything that will lead to a fight with a toughie.

They need to cut an attacker down with simple movements that can be learned in a few minutes," said Havan, who's an expert in Japanese aikido, Korean taekwondo and Thailand kickboxing.

Havan was also a three-time All-Vietnam champion in his prime during the Vietnam war.

I highly urge you buy the book and study under Havan. The lessons are very easy.

I should know. I am his student.

Name Makati's adopted herons and win a prize

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE MAKATI CITY GOVERNMENT IS looking for names for its newest residents—two male and female black-crowned herons.

The city, which recently declared itself a bird sanctuary, has launched a contest in search of the perfect name for the pair which recently moved into their new homes at the Makati Park and Garden.

"There are no criteria. We will just choose the most suitable name," Joey Salgado, chief of the city's Information and Community Relations Department, said yesterday.

The pair of herons were recently adopted by the Makati City government after being rescued by personnel of the Parks and Wildlife Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Those who want to take part in the contest may submit their entries to the ICRD office at the Old Makati City Hall building. Entries may also be faxed to 8998938, or sent by e-mail to icrd@makati.gov.ph. The deadline for submission of entries is on May 19.

The winning name will be announced during the city's 336th foundation day in June.

Winners will get a cash prize and a trophy in the shape of a heron.

During the occasion, the city government will also formally launch the heron as the city's symbol.

Makati has a special affinity for the species which used to be plentiful in the city during the 16th century.

The city council recently passed an ordinance declaring Makati a bird sanctuary.

Under the ordinance, harming or capturing birds and damaging their nests are prohibited.

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Kagawaran ng Tanggulang Pambansa
Department of National Defense

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(DND-Proper Procurement of IT Equipments)

I. The Department of National Defense, through DND-Proper Bid and Awards Committee, invites suppliers/manufacturers/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects:

Name of Project	Description	Approved Budget for Contract (ABC)
A. Procurement of Desktop Computer	Supply and Delivery of Desktop Computer for DND-Proper Offices	PhP 2,375,000.00
B. Procurement of Laptop Computer	Supply and Delivery of Laptop Computer for DND-Proper Offices	2,380,000.00
	Total	PhP 4,755,000.00

II. The schedule of activities are as follows:

ACTIVITIES	VENUE	DATE	TIME
Issuance of Bid Documents	Procurement Branch, OAS Bldg., DND	April 18, 2006 to May 8, 2006	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Pre-Bid Conference	OAS Annex Bldg.	April 27, 2006	9:30 AM – 12:00 NN
Deadline for Submission / Opening of Bids	OAS Annex Bldg.	May 09, 2006	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. 9184 dated 10 January 2003		
Post-Qualification			
Issuance of Notice of Award			

III. Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of Four Thousand Eight Hundred Pesos (P4,800.00) to the DND Proper BAC Secretariat, Procurement Branch, Office of Administrative Services, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Tel. No. 911-8118.

IV. The eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part-A (IRR-A).

V. To facilitate eligibility checking, manufacturers and/or suppliers who wish to participate in the public bidding may apply for registration with the DND-Proper BAC Secretariat at least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids for the procurement projects they wish to participate.

VI. The OSND assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

VII. The OSND reserves the right to reject any or all bids, wiave any formality and award the Contract to the bidder whose proposal is the most advantageous to the government as evaluated by the DND-Proper Bids and Awards Committee (DND-Proper BAC).

VIII. The invitation is also posted in the DBM Procurement Service website at www.procurementservice.org., and the DND website, in accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184. Further, it shall also be posted at conspicuous places in the premises of the Department of National Defense (DND).

(Sgd.) ASSISTANT SECRETARY RUBEN F CIRON
Chairman, DND-Proper BAC

(PDI - April 18 & 25, 2006)

METROBRIEFS

Woman nabbed in buy-bust

SOME P150,000 worth of anti-ulcer pills sometimes used to induce abortion were seized by authorities from a woman in Manila last Sunday. Insp. Cesar Teneros of the Special Operations Group of the Manila Police District said they seized more than 2,000 tablets of Cytotec from Teresa Lozada, 44, a vendor from Punta, Sta. Ana. Cytotec is a pill that is usually taken to prevent ulcer. It can, however, cause miscarriages in pregnant women. Investigation showed that before Lozada's arrest, the police had received information that she was behind the proliferation of the pills in the Quiapo area. An undercover policeman later contacted the suspect in Quiapo and pretended that he wanted to buy some pills from her. When Lozada handed over the pills to the undercover policeman on R. Hidalgo, near the corner of Quezon Boulevard in Quiapo, she was arrested. ***Tina G. Santos, with Eliza Victoria, trainee***

No overtime in Navotas

NAVOTAS Mayor Toby Tiangco has banned overtime work in government offices as part of the town's power conservation measures in anticipation of higher oil prices. In a statement, Tiangco also ordered all employees to save on electricity by following the power saving tips coming from the Manila Electric Company. To ensure that his directives were being followed, the mayor also directed the town's General Services Office to monitor the various government offices. Tiangco added that he will also ask the town's businessmen to participate in the power conservation program by reducing electricity consumption for lit up signs and billboards. ***Nancy C. Carvajal***

NBI bans nightclub raids

AGENTS of the National Bureau of Investigation are now banned from conducting raids on nightspots without formal complaints from victims. NBI officer-in-charge Nestor Mantaring said the old practice of raiding nightclubs and beer houses based on "mere tips" from informants has only encouraged corruption among the bureau's agents. " Some personused the indiscriminate raids as a way to make milking cows of nightspot owners. The owners also feel like they are being harassed with these kinds of raids," he added. ***Margaux C. Ortiz***

Fugoso Librar
BUHAYIN ANG MAYNI

NEW PUBLIC LIBRARY
Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and other city officials open the newly renovated Valeriano E. Fugoso Library on Aragon corner A.H. Lacson Streets in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Teenager dies, 3 hurt in QC road mishap

By DJ Yap

A COLLISION BETWEEN A TRIcycle and a gas tanker left a teenager dead and three others hurt before dawn yesterday in Quezon City.

Rey Layad, 18, was killed instantly after the tricycle being driven by his friend Shaira Cruz, 19, rammed into a tanker at the corner of Aurora Boulevard and Gilmore Street at around 3:30 a.m., police said.

The two, along with Anjo Paligan, 18, and Ginalyn Arboleda, 18, were on board the tricycle bound for Sta Mesa, Manila, when the accident occurred, according to traffic officer Ricardo Angeles of the Quezon City traffic sector 4.

The tricycle was cruising along Aurora Boulevard when the traffic light turned yellow. Instead of stopping, however, Cruz tried to beat the red light, not noticing the blue-gray tanker coming their way, Angeles said.

The impact caused Layad to fall off the vehicle, killing him instantly, police said. The other three passengers were rushed to the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Hospital.

Arboleda sustained only a few scratches, while Paligan fractured his left hand. Cruz, on the other hand, told investigators she found it difficult to move the right side of her body.

Police are looking for the driver of the gas tanker who did not stop after colliding with the tricycle.

Nepal parties call for demo at king's doorstep

KATMANDU—NEPAL'S ROYAL government imposed a fresh daytime curfew Monday after the opposition vowed a huge antimonarchy protest and six people died in a Maoist rebel attack.

The seven-hour curfew order in Katmandu came as opposition leaders ramped up pressure on beleaguered King Gyanendra by announcing a major demonstration for Tuesday in the capital after 18 days of protests and strikes demanding an end to the monarch's absolute rule.

Meanwhile, the US Embassy told the families of diplomats and some staff to leave the country because of security concerns.

The embassy in a statement warned other American citizens "should also depart Nepal as soon as possible."

Leaders from a seven-party alliance will address a rally at seven points on the 27-kilometer ring road around the capital, according to reports, as senior opposition leaders vowed to take the protest to the royal palace.

"The democratic republic has reached up to the king's ring road and now it moves to the royal palace," said senior protest leader Bamdev Gautam at a rally on the northern outskirts of the city late Sunday.

"We will organize a big protest the day after tomorrow and I request all the people to come on to the streets to make it a success," said the high-ranking member of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), one of the alliance parties.

The parties said they planned 1,000 marches, mass meetings and effigy burnings Monday as a curtain raiser to the main protest throughout the Katmandu Valley, the area encompassing the capital and home to 1.7 million people, according to reports.

King Gyanendra, in a bid to thwart new protests, on Monday set a new curfew in central Katmandu from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m., state television said, warning anyone who violated the order could be shot on sight.

Official cars with loudspeakers toured the streets warning people to stay inside their homes.

The city was suffering shortages of fuel, food and other essential goods as piles of festering rubbish littered the streets.

Large sections of the ring road were covered with burnt tires and roadblocks from nearly three weeks of daily protests as the king has struggled to quell the escalating calls for his removal.

Rebels, meanwhile, launched simultaneous attacks with guns and grenades late Sunday on a telecoms tower and police station at Chautara, 120 kilometers northeast of Katmandu, that left five Maoists and a soldier dead, the army said.

"Five bodies of Maoists were recovered from the clash site Monday morning and one of our men also died," said an official from army headquarters on condition of anonymity.

King Gyanendra seized power in February 2005 because he said the government was corrupt and had failed to tackle the bloody Maoist insurgency, which has left more than 12,500 dead over the last decade.

The seven-party alliance called on security forces to switch sides after at least 27 more protesters were injured Sunday during clashes on the outskirts of the capital.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, meanwhile, called Sunday for a rapid restoration of the multi-party system in Nepal to end the unrest gripping the kingdom, which he said has deeply troubled India. *AFP*

US Senate to reignite debate on immigration

WASHINGTON—PRODDED BY large demonstrations and the prospect of another on the horizon, Senate leaders will try to revive stalled immigration legislation this week, with some urging President Bush to mediate personally the sharp differences among Republicans on the volatile issue.

Two weeks after the Senate walked away from its immigration debate, leaders of both parties are expressing a new sense of urgency to act before the November midterm elections. Bush, who has made immigration a centerpiece of his legislative agenda and who could use a victory on Capitol Hill to revive his flagging second term, is expected to address the issue again on Monday in an appearance in Irvine, Calif.

After an Easter recess punctuated by large immigrant rights protests, both Democrats and Republicans say their colleagues recognize that if they do not press ahead it could bring a reaction from those who want stricter border enforcement, business operators who rely on foreign workers and advocates of immigrant rights.

"We're not going to be stampeded, but at the same time we understand that there is a giant problem out there," said Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., and chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who set a hearing for Tuesday on the economic impact.

Specter said he intended to use a White House meeting the same day to encourage Bush to "get into the fray now" by getting House and Senate Republicans to reconcile differences before the Senate passes a bill. "The time has come for specifics," Specter said.

Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada, the Democratic leader blamed by Republicans for tying up the legislation, and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., a chief architect of the Senate measure that fell apart two weeks ago, also called on Bush to get involved. In interviews, each said the president must push back against conservatives who want to limit the legislation to stronger border enforcement.

Bush has said he favors legislation that includes a guest worker program for illegal immigrants, and he used his radio address on Saturday to reiterate that goal.

Some Senate Republicans, led by John McCain of Arizona, are championing an approach that mixes stiffer border controls with potential citizenship for some illegal immigrants. *NYT*

SNUPPY (left), the first male dog cloned from adult cells by somatic nuclear cell transfer and his Labrador surrogate mother. REUTERS

Cloned dog marks first birthday

SEOUL—THE WORLD'S FIRST AND ONLY cloned dog celebrated its first birthday on Monday, as the leader of the South Korean team that produced the Afghan hound faced a criminal investigation for possible fraud and ethics violations.

The team led by scientist Hwang Woo-suk unveiled the dog named Snuppy last August amid global fanfare. Time magazine named Snuppy one of the most amazing inventions for 2005.

Hwang once basked in acclaim for his scientific achievements, with some in the country labelling him "the pride of Korea."

By the end of last year, however, his reputation was in tatters amid charges his team deliberately manipulated data and violated ethical standards in human egg procurement.

The birthday celebrations at the university where Hwang once ran his lab were subdued. Snuppy, short for Seoul National University puppy, is in good health and weighs about 29 kilograms (64 lb), university officials said. *Reuters*

World Bank backs $37-B debt relief to 17 poor nations

WASHINGTON—WORLD BANK MEMBERS have given formal backing to the cancellation of $37 billion in debt owed the Bank by 17 poor countries—most of them in Africa—at weekend meetings here of global finance leaders ending Sunday.

The endorsement came with a warning to beneficiary countries to avoid running up new obligations.

Colombian Finance Minister Alberto Carrasquilla, chairman of the World Bank's policymaking Development Committee, said members of the panel stressed that "countries that have received debt relief should avoid the accumulation of new, unsustainable debt."

They in addition noted "the importance of debt sustainability as a key consideration in the future commitment of development resources," Carrasquilla said.

The Bank's debt cancellation scheme will take effect July 1.

The World Bank's sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, approved the cancellation of $3.3 billion worth of debt in January.

Both debt relief projects were agreed upon last year by the Group of Eight powers—Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States.

The Bank and the Fund now plan to monitor new debt accumulation and have called on beneficiary countries to commit resources freed up by debt relief to anti-poverty initiatives. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Hungary winner Gyurcsany charts new reforms

GYURCSANY REUTERS

BUDAPEST—Hungary's Socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany, who won a historic reelection Sunday, is a millionaire businessman turned politician on a quest to modernize his formerly communist EU state. Gyurcsany's Socialists and their coalition partners, the liberal Free Democrats, triumphed in Sunday's runoff general elections, marking the first time since the fall of communism in 1989 that an outgoing Hungarian government has remained in office. "What we won is not about power. What we won is responsibility and work," a cheerful but restrained Gyurcsany told thousands of applauding sympathizers as he claimed victory on Sunday evening. Gyurcsany's name has become synonymous with reform in Hungary, a post-communist economic success that is now plagued by a soaring budget deficit. *AFP*

Singapore opposition party refuses apology

SINGAPORE—A Singapore opposition party is refusing to meet a Tuesday deadline to apologize to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his father over allegations of corruption, the party's leader said Monday. "We're not apologizing. Just because they say it's defamatory doesn't mean it's defamatory," Chee Soon Juan, secretary general of the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP), told AFP. Lee and his father, the city-state's first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, told Chee and 11 members of his party's central executive committee they would face legal action if they did not apologize and pay damages by the deadline, local media have reported. Lawyers for the Lee family say their clients were defamed in articles carried in the SDP's recent newsletter, which is sold on the streets. The lawyers said the articles implied the prime minister was perpetuating a corrupt political system set up by his father, Singapore's independence leader, to benefit the political elite. The elder Lee holds the title of minister mentor in his son's Cabinet. *AFP*

Jurors to weigh Moussaoui's life

MOUSSAOUI AP

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia—After a turbulent trial laced with the tragedy of Sept. 11, jurors will Monday be told by a US judge to decide whether al-Qaida plotter Zacarias Moussaoui should live or die. Moussaoui, the only man tried in the United States over the murderous 2001 strikes on New York and Washington which killed nearly 3,000 people, faces death or life in prison without parole. Though he was in jail on the fateful day, prosecutors say he hid his knowledge of the plot to let 19 al-Qaida "brothers" pull off the attacks. Defense lawyers, with whom Moussaoui has refused to cooperate, counter the Frenchman of Moroccan descent is a liar, bent on claiming an undeserved place in history, and should be spared as he is a paranoid schizophrenic. Judge Leonie Brinkema will reconvene court on Monday for dramatic final arguments, before instructing jurors on the complicated set of aggravating and mitigating factors that will lead them to their verdict. They have already found Moussaoui eligible for execution, after the first phase of the trial which saw six weeks of evidence. *AFP*

Bush asks Baker to lead Iraq study

WASHINGTON—In the late 1960s, an anguished President Lyndon B. Johnson sought advice from a respected elder statesman on the Vietnam quagmire. In part because of the counsel of former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, a onetime hawk turned skeptic on the war, Johnson shifted course in 1968, halting the bombing of North Vietnam and announcing he would not run for reelection. The analogy is far from perfect, but Republicans and Democrats are seeing parallels between the quiet designation last month of former Secretary of State James A. Baker III to head up a congressionally mandated effort to generate new ideas on Iraq and the role of Acheson, who had served under President Harry Truman. Baker, a longtime confidant of the first President Bush who has maintained a close but complicated relationship with the current president, plans to travel to Baghdad and the region to meet with heads of state on a fact-finding mission. "If you had a health problem, you'd want somebody to give you a second opinion," said Rep. Frank R. Wolf, an influential Virginia Republican who helped recruit Baker for the job. "What the United States needs on Iraq is some fresh ideas from people able to speak out, and no one is more qualified to do that than Jim Baker." *NYT*

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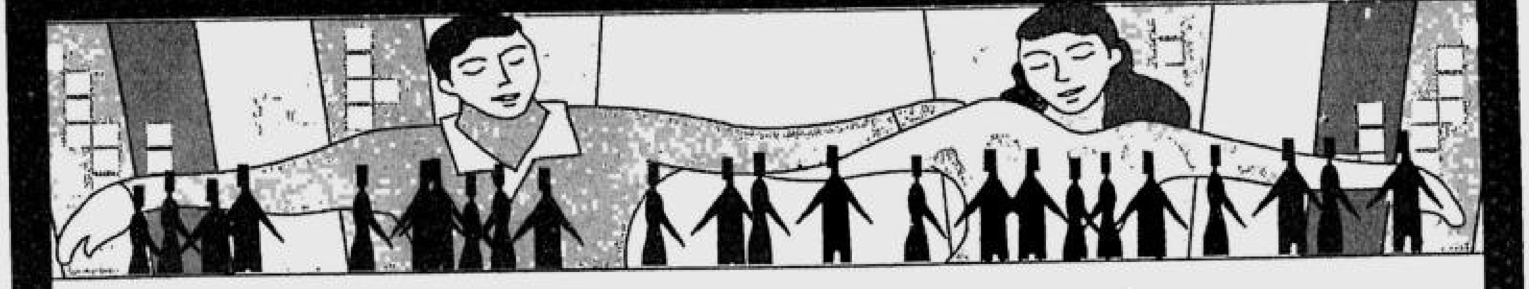

Co-Sourcing
Myth, Math and Magic

HR professionals have found more and more services that they can outsource successfully--recruitment, payroll, and benefits administration to name a few. But while outsourcing works well for administrative tasks that require little ongoing involvement of the HumanResource function in an organization, it is not suited for HR processes that are more strategic in nature and require greater input. Now comes... Co-sourcing, a partnership between the HR function and a service provider that is poised to become the next big wave in workforce strategy.

This session, aptly titled, Co-sourcing: Myth, Math and Magic, will differentiate the fact from the fiction, disclose co-sourcing investment requirements, and reveal the sustainable benefits co-sourcing can provide organizations.

2005 Mercer Health & Benefits Study

A total of eighty four companies participated in the 2005 Mercer Health & Benefits Study, the first of its kind undertaken in the Philippines. Highlights of the survey will be presented to give an overview of the employee benefit insurance market. The data and analysis should provide forum participants with a useful lens that they can use to plan or review their own respective benefits programs. Nine (9) Employee Benefit Programs are reviewed, ranging from Group Medical to Travel Insurance.

2006 Compensation Outlook

As the war for top-notch talent becomes increasingly more heated than ever, organizations struggle to come up with far-reaching creative approaches to build a strong 'employee value proposition'. The need for timely, comprehensive, and high-quality human capital information for sound analysis and decision-making has never been more critical. Bringing the statistics together, this session will allow the participants to gain valuable insights on what the trends are in *Compensation, Hiring, Salary Market Movement, Emerging HR Practices and Issues* and how these impact the organizations.

FORUM SPEAKERS

Su-Yen Wong is the Managing Director of Mercer Human Resource Consulting, ASEAN. She has over fourteen years' experience helping leading companies across North America and Asia develop business and organization strategies, improve operations, manage risk, and effectively implement change.
Ms. Wong is a frequent speaker at conferences in Asia, including recent events sponsored by the Economist, Business Week and Asia Business Forum. She is an experienced facilitator and has led strategy development and change management workshops for senior management teams across Asia.

Dr. Noel A. de Leon, PhD is the Country Manager of Mercer Human Resource Consulting in the Philippines. He has more than 25 years of experience in HR Management and Information Technology. He has been involved in various foreign and local projects relating to organizational development, change management and other related projects.
He regularly facilitates public seminars and has been invited to lecture on various topics both in the academe and business world. He is also an author of numerous published articles and teaches in business graduate school on part time basis.

Emmeline Navarro is the Vice President and Head of Mercer's Health & Benefits Business. She began her career in the insurance industry in 1986 when she joined Johnson & Higgins, now known as Marsh Philippines, Inc. Emmy's extensive experience in insurance broking and benefits consulting enables her, together with her team, to implement innovative services and solutions that benefit their multinational and local clients.

Mellanie Daracan is the Business Leader for Human Capital Product Solutions in the Philippines. She manages the Total Remuneration Survey for All Industry, Asia Pacific Compensation and Benefits Forum (APCBF), Asia Pacific IT and Telecoms (APITT), Chemical, Computer, Energy, and Hi-Tech Indusines in the Philippines.
She has been the local project team member for global consulting projects, particularly in mergers and acquisition covering inventory and review of compensation and benefits packages.

Please register on or before April 28, 2006.
Limited slots only.
Participant Fee: P2,250 (VAT inclusive).

For further inquiries and to register,
please contact *Yien Cortes* at
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or email us at blessie.ploquinto@mercer.com

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Tape mocks US failure to get Bin Laden

WASHINGTON—THE WHITE HOUSE SAID SUNday that al-Qaida leaders were "on the run" as the emergence of a new tape from Osama bin Laden served as a vexing reminder of the US failure to track down the terror mastermind.

"The al-Qaida leadership is on the run and under a lot of pressure. We are continuing to take the fight to the enemy abroad, and making it difficult for them to plan and plot against America," White House spokesperson Scott McClellan told reporters, adding that the US intelligence community believes the tape is authentic.

Another top US official cautioned that the audiotape warning by Osama bin Laden aired by Al-Jazeera on Sunday should not be taken lightly.

"I believe we need to take him seriously," US Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad said in an interview with CNN, adding that Bin Laden was vying to demonstrate with the tape that "he's still a player."

"He wants to be relevant to the situation. He wants to get attention," Khalilzad said.

The al-Qaida chief called on Muslim fighters to go to Sudan to wage war against "crusader thieves" and slammed the international isolation of the Hamas-led Palestinian government as proof of a "war by crusaders and Zionists against Islam."

It was not clear when the tape was made, but if it proves genuine, it would be the first from Bin Laden since Jan. 19.

But the audiotape also served as a bleak reminder that, four and a half years after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, the mastermind has yet to be tracked down.

Jane Harman, the top Democrat on the House of Representatives' Intelligence Committee, blamed the US military involvement in Iraq for having "bogged down" American troops and other resources and diverting attention from capturing Bin Laden.

"The tape reminds us that four years after 9/11, Osama bin Laden is still at large, the subject of the largest manhunt in history, and we haven't been able to find him," said Harman on Fox News Sunday.

Republican Sen. Arlen Specter also expressed frustration that so little apparent progress has been made in tracking down Bin Laden.

"Frankly, I'm very dissatisfied that we haven't brought him to justice and I think it has to be a top priority," he said. Locating him, Specter added, is "a tiny needle in a giant haystack."

Democratic Sen. John Kerry said that Bin Laden continuing to be at-large "is one of the reasons that (US Defense Secretary) Donald Rumsfeld should resign."

Kerry, who ran against President George W. Bush in the 2004 presidential election, criticized the Bush administration for failing to capture Bin Laden at Tora Bora in Afghanistan in late 2001.

Bin Laden is believed to have evaded capture by US and Afghan forces during the battle at Tora Bora and to be now hiding in Pakistan despite Bush's call for him to be hunted down "dead or alive." *AFP*

BIN LADEN in Afghanistan in undated photo.

AP

Director trod softy in filming Flight 93's story

By Jere Longman

NEW YORK—IN MAKING THE MOVIE "United 93," Paul Greengrass had to confront not only the bloody grimness of a terrorist hijacking, but also the sensitive politics of heroism.

As the courageous behavior of passengers and crew members who battled the four hijackers on the plane that crashed in a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001, became public, some families grew troubled that four former athletes who made phone calls from the plane—Todd Beamer, Mark Bingham, Tom Burnett and Jeremy Glick—received almost all the sunlight of media exposure. Many others aboard were left in shadow.

It's not that other victims' families discounted or resented the valor of those men. But the families resisted early attempts by politicians to honor only these four. There was concern that bravery aboard United Airlines Flight 93 not be made into a kind of Olympic sport, where some passengers received a gold medal for gallantry while others had to settle for silver or bronze.

"United 93" has its premiere on Tuesday at the Tribeca Film Festival and opens in theaters nationwide on Friday. More than half of the families of the victims have seen the film at screenings in Newark, N.J., and suburbs of San Francisco, the departure and destination cities for the flight, said a spokesperson for Universal, the studio releasing the film. Others requested and were sent DVDs; some say they can't bear to watch it.

Greengrass, who wrote and directed the movie, contacted the families early in the process; actors in the film also met with family members.

In truth, no one can know precisely who did what during the rebellion that prevented the hijackers from reaching their presumed target in Washington. None of the 33 passengers and seven crew members survived when the plane crashed into a spongy field outside Shanksville, Pa.

Not everyone could charge the cockpit along the narrow aisle of a 757 jetliner, family members concede. But they believe strongly that everyone did what he could in the face of horrific fear and certain death—consoling, encouraging, planning, praying.

In this widely held view, everyone should be considered equal in a collective act of bold resistance.

Yet some family members expressed disappointment with the breadth of television movies made previously about Flight 93, feeling that the lives of some lesser-known passengers and crew members were diminished or ignored.

Greengrass seemed to understand the delicacy of this issue acutely when he made his film and succeeded in depicting a group-inspired defiance, relatives of other passengers said in telephone interviews.

"I think they went out of their way to reinforce that it was 40 fantastic individuals who banded together to effect change in a drastic situation," said Gordon Felt, whose brother, Edward, was a passenger. *NYT*

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Key La Salle meet tackles UAAP ban

By Jasmine W. Payo

TOP OFFICIALS OF DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY will decide in an emergency meeting today its course of action after the UAAP recently suspended the school from competing in all sports disciplines this year in the wake of eligibility violations committed by two members of its champion men's basketball team in 2004.

"(The meeting) might lead to the creation of a special group to do further studies. There are many affected parties," Lito Tanjuatco, a member of the university's board of trustees and board of regents, said yesterday.

Filing an appeal remains an option for La Salle, but Tanjuatco noted that the move "is a very complicated matter which has many legal ramifications."

Tanjuatco also assailed the UAAP for denying La Salle due process in the eligibility scandal involving Archers Mark Benitez and Tim Gatchalian.

"We cited that it is the basic right of any person or institution to first be charged, be given the opportunity to refute the charges before being subjected to judgment," said Tanjuatco in a press conference at his Ortigas office yesterday.

Aside from the league's failure to specify the charges, Tanjuatco stressed that it did not identify "the guilty parties" nor "provide a recommendation to the UAAP board of trustees."

"When La Salle submitted its report to the UAAP, it said it was not satisfied," said Tanjuatco. "But it had no glaring difference (from La Salle's findings)."

In its internal investigation last year, La Salle tagged Archers assistant team manager Manny Salgado and contractual statistician Raul Lacson as the officials who helped secure the fake academic records that allowed Benitez and Gatchalian to play for the Archers, who went on to win the title in 2004.

Benitez still saw action for the Archers last year while Gatchalian was cut from the team roster.

Tanjuatco also questioned the voting held in Friday's meeting. In initial discussions, he claimed the board decided not to render immediate sanctions but deliberate only on possible charges against La Salle.

"Many will call this treachery," said Tanjuatco. "Instead of preparing and furnishing us with the list of charges or a written complaint, the UAAP board summarily decided, declared DLSU guilty.

"Charges must first be filed, then DLSU is given reasonable time to reply to the charges, and then and only then can a decision be rendered."

While the UAAP board members were unanimous in their decision to suspend La Salle, they differed in the length of ban to be imposed. In the end, the one-year penalty won by a 5-2 vote.

Meanwhile, the UAAP board has yet to discuss possible changes in its league records, including the overall standings in the last three years, as a result of the controversy.

ALEX Compton of Montaña tries to ward off Marvin Ortiguerra of Rain or Shine in this file photo.

Jewels stake solo top spot vs Painters

OFF TO ITS FINEST START, MONTAÑA PAWNSHOP TRIES TO KEEP THE solo lead when it kicks off its second-round campaign against Rain or Shine in the PBL Unity Cup at the San Andres Gym in Malate.

GAMES TODAY
(San Andres Gym)
2 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs Magnolia
4 p.m.—Montaña vs Rain or Shine

After a mediocre performance in the last conference, the Jewels dominated the first round with a 6-1 card, its best start since joining the league in 1998.

"I did not expect that we would emerge on top," said Jewels coach Nel Parado. "I thought that if we'd be in the middle, it would still be okay. But the hard work, patience and perseverance of my players are paying off."

Unlike early leaders Montaña and Rain or Shine, Magnolia Ice Cream and Harbour Centre will try to recover from a poor first-round performance when they clash at 2 p.m.

Coach Leo Austria hopes for consistency in Rain or Shine's second encounter with Montaña at 4 p.m.

The Jewels leaned on the heroics of Froilan Baguion to slip past the Elasto Painters, 60-58, in the first round.

"We led most of the game, even taking a 10-point lead in the fourth quarter, but we still came out losers. I can't forget that loss," said Austria.

The Painters have been banking on last conference's Most Valuable Players Jojo Tangkay and their intimidating roster of big men.

Veteran forward Marvin Ortiguerra proved instrumental in giving the Painters their fifth win, scoring 14 points in their 63-52 victory over Magnolia last Saturday.

The Jewels, in contrast, have been banking on their streaky shooters led by Alex Compton, Baguion and Al Vergara.

Guards have been leading Harbour Centre's campaign, but they failed to pull it off in the closing minutes against Montaña last Saturday.

Joseph Yeo was unstoppable in the fourth quarter as he unloaded 16 points, including three straight triples, in Harbour Centre's 69-66 conquest of Montaña.

Magnolia edged Harbour Centre, 63-57, in their first-round match. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Nat'l Open wrestling today

SOUTHEAST GAMES GOLD MEDALISTS Christina Villanueva and Gemma Silverio WILL lead national team members who will see action when the 2006 Wrestling National Open unfurls today at the Atrium Robinson's Place Ermita.

Villanueva, who ruled the women's freestyle 51-kg class in the 23rd SEA Games, and Silverio, winner in the 59kg, will be competing in higher weight categories this year. Villanueva will see action in the 55-kg class while Silverio will strut her wares in the 63-kg division.

Joining them are fellow nationals and SEAG gold medalists Jimmy Angana, (59-kg freestyle) and Francis Villanueva (120-kg Greco Roman); silver medalists Margarito Angana (55-kg Greco Roman) and Cherry Matriz (72-kg freestyle).

Rising stars backstop Legends in NBA Tour

CALVIN MURPHY, DENNIS RODMAN AND co. will not be without help when they take on two well-prepared Philippine sides.

Several standouts from the National Basketball Association's Developmental League will join the Legends in two games of The Bad Boy Tour, with Arkansas Rim-Rocker Kareem Reid promising to be a headache for the Filipinos.

The 5-foot-11 point guard is a devastating scorer who can truly light it up from inside and out and he is just one of the guys Pilipinas Basketball coach Chot Reyes said he is wary of.

"We've not had the benefit to scout these guys," Reyes said. "Sure, we all know how the Legends play, but we are in the dark as to the young guys that they will be bringing in.

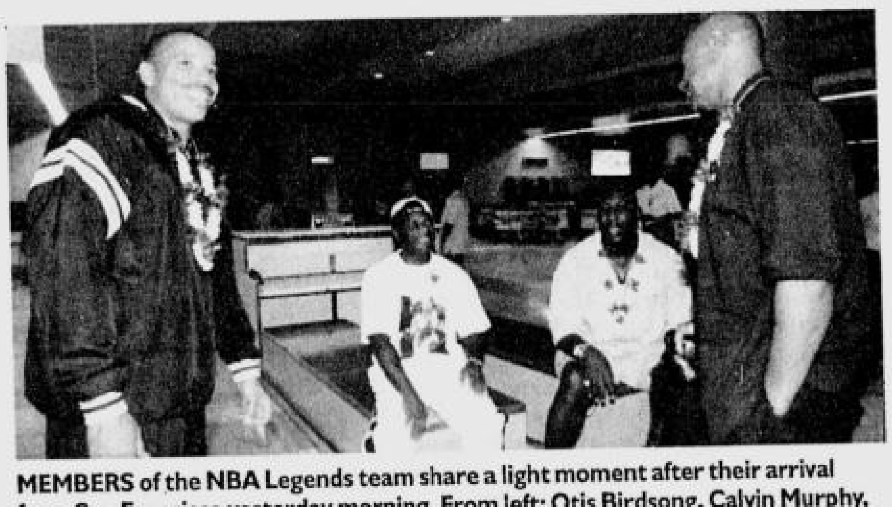
"So that just adds to the challenge. The game will be very interesting."

Former Oral Roberts University star Chad Wilkerson is also flying in, together with Myron Allen, Olu Famutimi and Colion Boddicker for the games scheduled at the Mandaue Sports Center on Thursday against the San Miguel All-Stars and on May 1 against the RP Team at the Araneta Coliseum.

Allen is a 6-foot guard while Famutini is a 6-foot-5 small forward. Wilkerson is 6-11 and was the Golden Eagles' leading scorer with a 16.3 average in 1999.

"I tell you, these guys can all play and give the fans the game they want to see—high-scoring and above-the-rim," Mario Whitmire, president of the organizing West End Sports, said.

Tickets are available through all Ticketnet outlets at 911-5555.



MEMBERS of the NBA Legends team share a light moment after their arrival from San Francisco yesterday morning. From left: Otis Birdsong, Calvin Murphy, Darryl Dawkins and Sidney Moncrief. Dennis Rodman and Alex English, the two other stars of the Legends team, will arrive tomorrow. JESS YUSON

RIDING THE WAVES: Australian Rebecca Woods rides a wave during the Roxy Pro in Tavarua yesterday. Woods placed second in her opening round heat to advance to round three where she will face Hawaiian Megan Abubo. AFP

RP trackfest joining Olympic Festival

THE ANNUAL NATIONAL OPEN track and field championships will push through in June instead of the first week in May.

The new schedule allows the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association to stage its centerpiece event simultaneously with the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC)-backed Olympic Festival in Nueva Ecija on June 21-25.

Patafa president Go Teng Kok added that the decision to reset the National Open from its original May 4-7 date is more advantageous "to us and the Philippine Sports Commission."

"We understand that the PSC is having problems with its finances, and holding the National Open with other national opens of other NSAs in the Olympic Festival would be beneficial to all parties," he said.

The original schedule also runs in conflict with the Palarong Pambansa set May 7-13 in Naga City.

Ozamiz five nips Iligan in NBC tilt

ILIGAN CITY—DEFENDING CHAMPION Ozamiz repulsed Firefly Lightings-backed Iligan, 72-69, Sunday to remain as the only unbeaten team in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the packed MSU-ITT gym here.

Billy Bansil sparkled in the playoff period to lead the Cotta Shrine cagers of Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog to their straight victory in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

Bansil finished with 19 points and 12 rebounds as he helped deal the crusaders of Mayor Lawrence Cruz and team manager Freddie Siao their third loss in seven games.

The Crusaders started strong and erected double-digit leads. But Ozamiz hit its stride in the second canto, going on a 12-0 run to move ahead, 35-33, and then settled for a 38-35 halftime edge.

Last season's MVP, Christian Nicdao, and Ferdie Go sparked a 13-0 drive by Iligan to tie the score at 66, but the Ozamiz cagers steadied down the stretch to pull through.

Iligan tied Gov. Manny Piñol's North Cotabato Braves at second place in the southern division.

The scores:

OZAMIZ 72—Bansil 19, Alberto 10, Basco 10, Sampilo 9, Alvarado 7, Llangco 5, Guerrero 4, Cavan 2, Yabut 2, Lapera 0, Cabigkis 0.

ILIGAN 69—Go 20, Nicdao 12, Hubalde 11, Ayodelled 11, Omiping 8, Sagad 2, Matias 2, Gandarosa 2, Canoy 2, Baguio 2, Kalaw 1, Tagulnes 0.

Quarters: 15-21, 38-35, 60-46, 72-69

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Samsung Tour opening leg starts at BCC today

BAGUIO—MARVIN DUMANDAN guns for a second straight major title as he leads a star-studded cast vying for the championship division in the first leg of the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour starting today at the Baguio Country Club course here.

Dumandan, winner of the DHL-WWW Express Amateur Open at Canlubang last month, will be up against almost the same band of challengers in the 72-hole tourney kicking off a five-leg elimination series all over the country.

Also in the field are Mike Bibat and Jay Bayron, who teamed up with the Riviera-based Dumandan and the now-professional Juvic Pagunsan in winning the Manila Southeast Asian Games gold medal last December.

National Caddies Open champ Jessie Balasabas and Jonel Ababa, the star of Canlubang's winning campaign in the PAL Interclub, spearhead the contingent from the Calatagan stable.

Posing as a big threat to the locals are 16 Koreans carrying single-digit handicaps including last year's national champion Kim Chang-hoi.

The Samsung Tour is the only series in the country which features gross competitions in different handicap classifications for men and ladies. It is also sponsored by Titleist, Taylor Made, C-Lium Fibre, Microtel and Custom Clubmakers/KZG, Sunbolt with Jam 88.3. Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9 and 99.5 RT, Sports Plus as media partners.

Coinciding with the championship division play are the 36-hole competitions in Class C and Class D. Golfers in Class A and Class B play on April 27-28 simultaneous with the last two rounds of the championship.

The other legs in the Samsung Tour calendar are Summit Point in Lipa City, on May 16-19, Rancho Palos Verdes in Mandug, Davao City, on June 15-18, Splendido Taal on Aug. 8-11 and Del Monte in Cawayanon, Bukidnon, on Oct. 5-8.

The national finals will be hosted again by the Mt. Malarayat Golf Club in Lipa City, Nov. 7-10.

For inquiries, contact the Professional Sports Management Group at 635-0010, fax 6315768 or 0917-8121242.

Asian pool slots up in qualifying

SIXTEEN SLOTS TO THE MAIN DRAW OF THE RICH ENERVA ASIAN 9-ball Tour Ladies Championship are at stake in the qualifying round today at the Paeng's Skybowl in Robinson's Galleria, Mandaluyong City.

National team member Mary Ann Basas and Johanna Dee are the Filipinos in the qualifying field. They will try to join seeded compatriots Rubilen Amit and Irish Ranola in the 32-man main draw of the event that offers $10,000 to the champion.

The losing finalist in the event organized by sportsman Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, goes home with $5,000. The losing semifinalists earn $2,500 each, while fifth to sixth spots are good for $1,500 each.

The event is also supported by Nature's Best Products Inc. and Solar Sports Entertainment and sanctioned by the Asian Confederation of Billiards Sports and the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) headed by Ernesto "Ernie" Fajardo.

Main draw action gets going tomorrow until Friday at the Robinson's Galleria fountain area and will be aired live on IBC-13 and Solar Sports.

A large number of foreign participants will also seek places in the final 32, among them Angeline Magdalena Ticoalu of Indonesia, Hyun Ji Won of South Korea, Pei Chen Tsai, Chieh-Yu Chou, I-Yun Su, Jui-Fang Fan, Huei-Shan Lai, Ya-Ling Chen, Yuan Chun Lin, Shu-Han Chang, Hsiang-Ling Tan, Chun-Hua Lin, Shu-Pin Kao and Pei-Chun Lin of Chinese-Taipei.

Two-time defending champion Ga Young Kim of Korea, Jennifer Chen and Shin-Men Liu of Chinese-Taipei, Akimi Kajitani of Japan, Desak Kasih Aryati and Nova Floura Rachmawati of Indonesia, Pan Xiao Ting and Zhou Meng Meng of China, Chai Zeet Huey and Hoe Shu Wah of Singapore are the seeded players.

"We hope to perform well in this prestigious and historic event. Please pray for us," said the 24-year-old Amit, a Cebuana, who swept the gold medals in the women's division of last year's Southeast Asian Games.

Amit finished in the Top 24 of the last World Pool Championship in Taiwan and finished eighth in the Japan Open.

For details, contact Puyat Sports at 896-9940 for details. *Marlon Bernardino*

JENNIFER Chen: Among the top contenders

Lyceum spikers win

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LYCEUM DREW FIRE FROM MAIN gunner Concon Legaspi to turn back Far Eastern University, 26-24, 25-23, 16-25, 25-19, yesterday and join early leaders in the Shakey's V-League at the Blue Eagle Gym.

Typifying the Lady Pirates' tenacity, Legaspi made 16 of her 18 points on attack. She got ample support from Dahlia Cruz and Beverly Boto, who joined hands for five points coming from blocks.

"Defense did it for us," said Lyceum coach Emil Lontoc, whose charges won the WNCAA title last year.

The Lady Tamaraws, last year's University Games champion, managed to push the Lady Pirates to the edge especially in the first two sets but later on found the opposing side impenetrable with Cruz and Boto behind the net.

Legaspi, who was part of the champion La Salle last conference, was at the forefront of the Lyceum charge, hitting solid spikes which FEU failed to fend off.

Lyceum joined Ateneo and Adamson in the lead with one win apiece in the event presented by Shakey's Pizza with support from Mikasa and Accel and aired over ABC-5.

La Salle and San Sebastian, the UAAP and NCAA champion, respectively, were still playing at presstime, each eyeing a share of the lead.

DLSU, San Beda lead

MAKE WAY FOR THE COLLISION between De La Salle and San Beda, the only unbeaten teams in the Total-Filoil-Flying V Homegrown Cup.

The Green Archer All-Stars streaked to their fourth straight victory by downing University of the Philippines, 89-80, priming up for their much-awaited encounter with the idle Red Lions (3-0).

Ex-pros Tony Boy Espinosa poured 35 points, Johnedel Cardel 20 and Noli Locsin 19 as La Salle sent the Fighting Maroons to their third straight loss in the tournament sponsored by Shell and Globe.

In the other alumni game, Far Eastern University, with Eric Gascon unloading 33 points, thwarted Ateneo, 92-89, to post its second win in four games, sharing third place with idle Letran.

In high school action, La Salle-Greenhills crushed UP Integrated School, 73-56, while the FEU Baby Tamss edged the Ateneo Blue Eagles, 67-66.

SPORTSWATCH

Ubanan non-master champion

NAZARIO UBANAN BEAT ROEL ABELGAS IN THE LAST ROUND TO EMERGE AS this month champion of the ACCA Chess Fest non-master division. Ubanan won P3,000 cash and a trophy donated by Loren Tabilog of Chess Class 149 Internet Café. Other winners in this event organized by Active Chess Center of Asia Inc. were Christopher Castellano, Dino Ballecer, Jason Salubre and Nelson Mariano III, second to 5th places.

Roligon derby slates 58 matches

THE SHOWDOWN OF PROMINENT COCKERS RESUME TODAY AT THE NEWLY renovated and 15,000-seat Roligon Mega Cockpit via the National Cockers Association (NCA) 5-cock derby featuring 58 superb matches. Today's hosts are Gov. Ito Ynares, Rep. Butch Pichay and actor Edu Manzano. Meanwhile, the Tukaan 5-cock derby finally unfolds on Saturday and on May 2, 4 and 6. "With more than 150 fights on Saturday's opening round, the derby will start at 2 p.m.," said host Rolly Ligon who put up a guaranteed prize of P2 million for an entry fee at P8,800. For details, call 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812 (Jona).

Salpukan at Makati tomorrow

THE SUMMER SALPUKAN 6-COCK DERBY WITH P4.4 MILLION AT STAKE blasts off tomorrow at Makati Coliseum. Sponsor is B-Meg Derby Ace. The cockfest continues April 29, May 2, 4, 6, 11 and 13, the event dangles the following guaranteed prizes: P3 million cash, two brand new Toyota cars (Vios and Altis) and two motorcycles. Among those competing are Salpukan I double champion Rey Briones, Boy Marzo, Erwin Mallari, Dome Corpuz, Rep. Baham Mitra, Boy Javier, Butchoy Olano, Emil Chua, Alex Calderon, Luis Tapia, Celso Evangelista, Spencer Group, Efren Canlas and Jingco Brothers. "Cockers and breeders should take note that the entry fee of only P11,000 is the same as in an ordinary 4-cock derby," said promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co. Contact 896-3545 or 895-6475 (Joan or Stephanie).

Roligon Tukaan begins April 29

AFTER PRESENTING TWO SMASHING DERBIES AT THE ONSET OF 2006, PROmoter Rolly Ligon unleashes another rich cockfest at Roligon Mega Cockpit, billed as Tukaan 5-cock derby on April 29, May 2, 4 and 6. No less than P2 million in guaranteed prize is up for grabs, said Ligon. The fastest win champion will drive home a brand new Toyota Innova. Entry fee is P8, 800. Held last February was the 429-entry Roligon Anniversary Derby, followed by the 360-entry Largahan 5-cock derby last month. For the opening round (2-cock) on Saturday, more than 150 participants are seeing action. Call 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812 (Jona).

Heritage Cup champion

THE PHILIPPINE HERITAGE CUP DERBY SERIES GRAND CHAMPION WILL BE known after tonight's 5-bullstag at the Araneta Coliseum. A prize of P400,000 awaits the grand champion while the runner-up gets P100,000. The leading contenders are Baby Canillas (10 points); Danny Ty and William Chia (9.5); Raffy Campos, Edwin Aranez and Boy Gamilla (9); Anthony Lim (9); Raul Adan (9); Joseph Chua and Romero Yu (9). Meanwhile, the LGBA Bakbakan eliminations (4-bullstag) follows on April 27 also at Araneta. Only Bakbakan-banded bullstags are accepted. Call 926-7808, 924-5072 or 0920-5851940 (Taz Lunasco).

Counting on Kobe

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I LIKE KOBE BRYANT AND THE LOS ANGELES Lakers to advance. But that's more of a wishful thinking than anything.

Despite Bryant, the seventh-seeded Lakers (45-37) are expected to be dusted off by the Phoenix Suns (54-28). The Suns aren't only No. 2 but are talent-rich; to begin with, they have Steve Nash, the Sun that never sets.

The Lakers are lucky they are back, considering they are now a non-glamour team with only one star: Bryant. Certainly, Mihm, Odom, a Parker named Smush, and a Brown called Kwame are hardly household names.

Kwame Brown. Yeah. He was the upstart Michael Jordan had signed up for Washington and later lambasted while the six-ring NBA legend was still a Wizard.

While the Lakers were thrown into the misfortune of meeting such a powerhouse team in Phoenix this early, the Clippers, the Lakers' brothers in Los Angeles, can be considered lucky. The sixth-seeded Clippers (47-35) have the home court advantage and are not exactly the underdogs against the third-seeded Denver Nuggets (44-38).

In the unlikely event that they pull through, the NBA's most wondrous match-up will materialize in the next round: Lakers versus Clippers. Imagine a series played in the same building—the Staples Center in Los Angeles—between teams of contrasting styles and fan following. A knockout!

But for Bryant at the moment, the goal—a monumental one, to say the least—is to achieve the nearly impossible: defeat the Suns. For, indeed, the Lakers' series with the Suns will be a defining moment in Bryant's Shaq-less life two years after the celebrated, animosity-ridden Bryant-O'Neal breakup at Los Angeles.

Surely, it's hoping against hope. Despite his enormous talent, Bryant, who won this year's scoring title, will need the help of all his nondescript teammates—and a miracle—to survive the Suns.

An acid test, indeed, for a guy who, as an 18-year-old preppy, went from high school to the NBA just a while back.

* * *

Of the 78 winners thus far in the Philippine Poker Tour, one is a woman. Of the 350 who have participated, 20 are women.

So, who said poker is a male-only event?

Any game that requires intelligence is gender-free. Any table sport that demands guts is for all sexes. In short, poker is for the intelligent, gutsy.

The nationwide tournament has produced 65 winners from Metro Manila, 11 from Cebu and two from Baguio.

The satellite events are set at San Mig, Alabang Town Center every Wednesday, Valle Verde Country Club in Pasig every Friday and Saturday, and at Elbow Room at Metro Walk in Pasig every Thursday. In Cebu City, it's at Raja Park Hotel every Friday.

Those who wish to directly join the main event on April 29-30, go to Airport Casino Filipino in Parañaque. Players can also register online by visiting www.philippinepokertour.com. Pay P21,000 before April 29 and you are automatically qualified to win the top prize of P1 million plus a gold bracelet. Second prize is P200,000, third prize P100,000 and from 4th to 10th placers, from P50,000 to P40,000.

My salutation goes to Rey Gamboa, whose passion for this thousand-year-old or so game that's fit only for brave hearts and the mentally tough has led to the birth of the tournament robustly backed by such fine guys like Ed Mapa and Arben Santos. Cheers!

* * *

GEEWHIZ TO PEEWEE. The Pasay City Mayor's Cup on April 28 at Villamor is worthy of our support since it is a socio-oriented event. Mayor Pewee Trinidad will use the proceeds of the tournament to help finance the schooling, feeding centers and soup kitchens for the city's street children. Among the major backers of the 18-holer, put together by big-hearted guys like Jun Amante, Fred Suarez and Lt. General Jose Reyes, are Philippine Airlines, Pagcor, San Miguel Corp., Don Mariano Nocum, Panasonic, Rustan's and my own newspaper, the INQUIRER. Here's a glass to man's infinite kindness. I plan to do my own share by working as rules man for the tournament in tandem with my idol, Mr. Golf himself, Taby "Insan" Tabaniag.

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

FROM LEFT: Ed Formoso, Peter Keller, Johnny Romualdez and Ute Huebner at the German Club in Makati.

PFF, German Technical Cooperation sign accord

THE PHILIPPINE FOOTBALL FEDeration (PFF) and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) recently signed an agreement calling for both institutions to promote the GTZ's "peace promotion through sports" initiative in Mindanao and the Fifa World Cup in Germany this June. PFF president Johnny Romualdez, PFF's overall 2006 World Cup coordinator Ed Formoso, GTZ's senior program adviser Peter Keller and Ute Huebner-GTZ, adviser for peace development, signed the agreement at the German Club in Makati last week.

Present at the signing were Rolf Saligmann, Charge d'Affair of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Volker Avenmarg, director, Goethe Institut, Paula Guevara, Goethe Program Coordinator and Linda Schaefer, GTZ consultant.

Romualdez said that the PFF will organize football festivals and tournaments in several provinces countrywide through its various provincial associations to compliment GTZ's promotion of peace and development through football-only activities.

PFF-GTZ held its initial salvo in Davao recently with Ateneo de Davao emerging as the top school by winning four categories.

The event was organized by the Davao Football Association, which is headed by Gerry Romero Salas.

PFF-GTZ is supported in this project by Lufthansa Airlines, Goethe-Institut and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Sportswriter's mother dies

TERESITA STA. MARIA CORDERO, OF STA. CRUZ, LAGUNA, AND QUEZON CITY, and St. Theresa's College Class '56, peacefully passed away Sunday morning at St Luke's Medical Center due to pancreatic cancer. She was 71. Teresita is the mother of The Philippine Star sportswriter Abac Cordero. She is survived by husband Peping of Tarlac City, children Vicente, Ma. Aida, Ma. Adela and Enrico, and grandchildren Diego Javier and Domino Rio. Her remains lie in state at the Sto. Domingo Church along Quezon Ave. Cremation is scheduled Thursday at 11 a.m. at Funeraria Paz on Araneta Ave.

TO THE
3rd AJ GOLF TOURNAMENT

AJ GOLF TOURNAMENT: Winners receive their trophies from POC chair Robert Aventajado (fifth from left) also chair of the All For Jesus Marriage Encounter Community and Angelique Lazo (first from left). From left are Capt. Kazuo Nonaka, low net champion, Michael Cheon, low net runner-up and also winner for nearest to the pin, Jaime Panganiban, low gross champion, Mariano Araneta, low gross runner-up, Roland Kapunan, longest drive, Milo Fernandez, most accurate drive and Daniel Lee, nearest to the pin.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Accomplice (6), River Bandit (8), Premiere Event (1), JJ'S Friend (4)
Race 2—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Pabilic Express (5), Passing Through (12), Mark's Rose (6), Pretty Pretty Girl (1), Speed Of Lightning (2), Real Magic (5)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Kim Possible/Dashing (7), Tervalac (8), Aim And Fire (4), Bull Knight (5), Makati Haven (6)
Race 4—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Sandok (3), Brute Force (2), Lady Be Gold (11), He's So Lucky (9), Color Of The Wind (7), Fancy Dancer (1)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Sutter's Wealth (6), Don King (5), Apex (1), Wine And Roses (2)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Quick Pick (2), In The Wind (6), Heart Of The Wind (1), Ravensworth (4)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Cool Operator (5), El Love Senora (8), Golden Touch (10), Power Of The Wind (1), Western Dancer (4)
Race 8—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Juanito's Dream (4), Red Storm (7), Smiling Jaeda/Dynamic Jason (6)., Refreshing (8), King Aljhun (9)
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Bullish Dream (3), Latin Music (6), Astimegoesby (1), Dulce My Love (10), Long Hitter (4), Replica (9)

Nadal rips Federer anew, keeps title

MONTE CARLO—SPANISH SUperstar Rafael Nadal has targeted the long-standing, unbeaten clay court records of Guillermo Vilas and Bjorn Borg as he builds up to the defense of his French Open crown.

Nadal retained his Monte Carlo Masters title here on Sunday with a 6-2, 6-7 (2/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) victory over Roger Federer, his fourth win over the world number one in five meetings.

It was also his 42nd successive win on clay and the teenage left-hander now stands third on the all-time list behind Guillermo Vilas (53) and Bjorn Borg (46).

"The record of Borg and Vilas? I have thought about it," said Nadal.

Sunday's success here in three hours, 49 minutes marked Federer's second defeat this season—both at the hands of the teenage Spaniard who also beat the world number one in last month's Dubai final.

"It was a very unbelievable day for me," said Nadal. "It's special to begin the clay season like this. Beating Roger in the final is even more special, it's great."

The reigning Roland Garros champion, the world number two, also beat his rival for the second time on clay after ousting the Swiss star in the French Open semi-final last year.

But even in defeat—and with an unaccustomed 78 unforced errors—Federer analyzed the loss with calm precision.

"I have to adjust a lot to play against him," said the top seed, now with a 33-2 win-loss record in 2006.

Federer shrugged off his losing record against the talented 19-year-old, winner of eight clay crowns in 2005.

"I've had three losses in a row against him—of course I wish I could have won them," explained Federer. "But they don't break down my will or hope.

"I care more about not losing to him in Grand Slams and to be ahead more than 2,000 points in the rankings—that's what I care about." *AFP*

RAFAEL Nadal exults after winning against Roger Federer. AP

Suns shine; Pacers win in playoffs

EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY—Former Nets guard Anthony Johnson made two free throws with 0.9 seconds left, and the Indiana Pacers beat New Jersey 90-88 to take Game 1 of their NBA Eastern Conference first-round series on Sunday.

Jermaine O'Neal scored 11 of his 15 points in the fourth quarter for the sixth-seeded Pacers, who became the first road team to win a game in this postseason.

Stephen Jackson scored 18 points and reserve Fred Jones added 15 for the Pacers, who forced Vince Carter and Jason Kidd, two of New Jersey's "Big Three" into horrible shooting games.

Carter had 31 points and 13 rebounds, but shot 12-of-33 from the field. Kidd was only 2-of-11 for five points for the Nets, the Atlantic Division champions.

Suns 107, Lakers 102

At Phoenix, Tim Thomas had 22 points and a career playoff-high 15 rebounds to help Phoenix escape with a win over Los Angeles.

Steve Nash had 20 points, including a crucial 3-pointer with 1:07 to play, and 10 assists.

Kobe Bryant, the NBA scoring champion with 35.4 points per game, scored 22 points.

Pistons 92, Bucks 74

At Auburn Hills, Michigan, Rasheed Wallace scored 17 of his 22 points in the first half and Richard Hamilton scored 21 to lead Detroit in Game 1 of its first-round series.

The top-seeded Pistons were so balanced offensively that they started the final quarter with four scorers in double figures, and were so tough at the other end that Milwaukee didn't have one.

Mavs 103, Grizzlies 93

At Dallas, the Mavericks shredded the NBA's stingiest defense with 60 first-half points and got key baskets when they needed them in the opener of their series with Memphis.

Dirk Nowitzki led Dallas with 31 points.

SOLAR SPORTS will air the Chicago-Miami tussle at 8 a.m. today with a replay at 8 p.m.

Yim prevails as Sorenstam falters

SUNG AH YIM: First win AFP

STOCKBRIDGE, GEORGIA—South Korean Sung Ah Yim claimed her first US LPGA title on Sunday as Swedish superstar Annika Sorenstam suffered a rare final-round collapse.

Yim nabbed three birdies, including one at the 18th hole, and three bogeys en route to an even-par 72 and a 16-under total of 272 for the $1.4-million tournament.

Sorenstam, who won here last year by 10 shots and was seeking her 68th career title, settled for a three-over 75.

Sorenstam had fired an 8-under 64 on Saturday to take a one-shot lead into the final round.

Fil-American Dorothy Delasin fired a 69 to climb to a share of 31st place at 283. Jennifer Rosales skied to a 78 and wound up tied for 55th with a 286 aggregate. *AFP*

Jr qualifying slated today

JOHN KIER ABDON HOPES TO SUSTAIN HIS solid play last week that pushed him ahead of the bigger names in the boys Class A field as the qualifying tournament for the Callaway Junior World Championships resumes today at the Canlubang north and Riviera executive courses in Cavite.

Abdon is four shots clear of Mico Yee after breaking par twice in three rounds. But he will have his hands full trying to foil Yee and two other feared challengers, Miko Alejandro and pre-tournament favorite Tonton Asistio.

A disappointment last week, Asistio is in fourth place and eight shots back. He started with an 80 but shot 72s in his last two rounds to stay in the hunt.

Bambee dela Paz, meanwhile, is just a stroke up on reigning Philippine Ladies Open champ Debbie de Villa and Crystal Superal in girls Class A.

Division winners of the tourney will be given free tickets to Los Angeles by Philippine Airlines which is a major event sponsor like Samsung and Callaway.

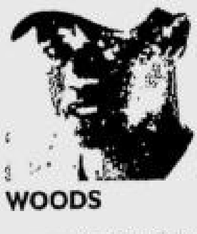
Mia Piccio and Regine de Guzman share the top spot in girls Class B, Miguel Tabuena is just two up in boys Class C while Mia Legaspi and Rachita Vasandani are all square in girls Class E.

Appleby tops Houston tilt

HUMBLE, TEXAS—AUSTRALIAN STUART APpleby shot a 5-under 67 to win the Shell Houston Open on Sunday and join Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson as the only two-time winners on the US PGA Tour this year. Appleby, also the 1999 winner in Houston, finished at 19-under 269. *AP*

Tiger takes 440-ft leap

WELLINGTON—Golf superstar Tiger Woods has taken to living dangerously in New Zealand, plunging more than 135 meters (440 feet) on the country's highest bungee jump, a newspaper reported Monday.


WOODS

The jump on Sunday near the South Island tourist center of Queenstown came a day before he was due to take part in a rough-and-tumble stock car race, according to the Otago Daily Times.

Woods twice made the jump, including an 8.5-second free fall, from a cable car over the Nevis Valley with his caddy, New Zealander Steve Williams, who took another kind of plunge by getting married on Friday.

The 10-time majors winner, who said last week he is taking time out from the PGA tour while his father Earl is ill with cancer, is due to take part in a charity stock car race at Huntly south of Auckland later Monday.

He said last week he was prepared to give as good as he got in the 12-lap race on the tight dirt track.

Woods did not say how long he would be out of competitive golf but indicated he would definitely contest the US Open in mid-June. *AFP*

National Tour National Tour National Tour
Winston in CONCERT
Summer MUSIC BLAST
Featuring
Freestyle
Truefaith
Sat. April 29, 9 pm
Cocomangas Beach and Oyster Bar, Boracay
Philippine Airlines
It's about experience
Brought to you by:
Winston
Spirit of the U.S.A.
No minors allowed. Open to persons 18 years old and above only. Organizer reserves the right to refuse entry to those without IDs as proof of age.

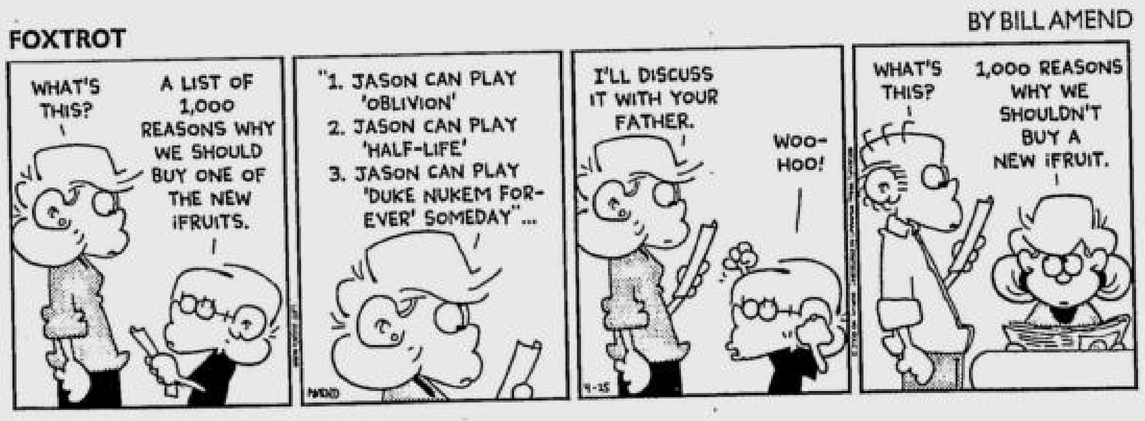
Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Comic*Relief*

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

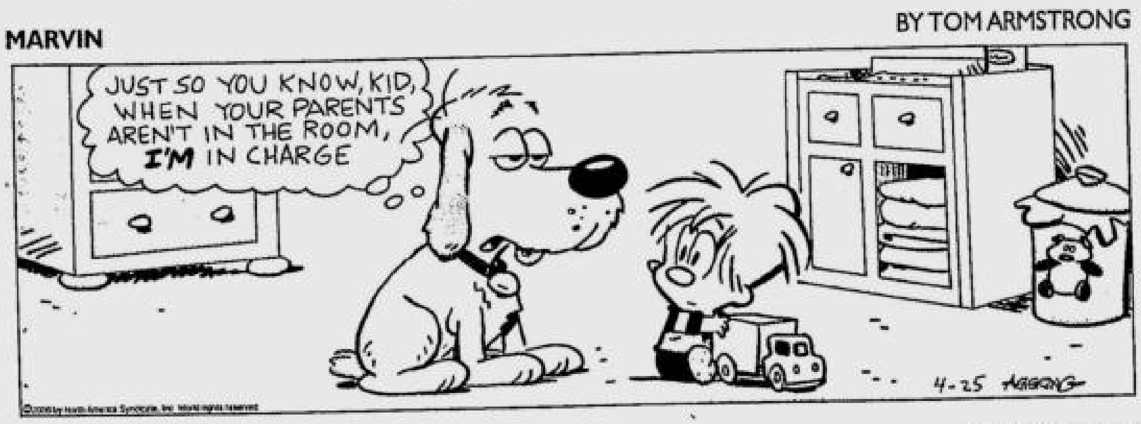
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT'S THIS?
A LIST OF 1,000 REASONS WHY WE SHOULD BUY ONE OF THE NEW iFRUITS.
"1. JASON CAN PLAY 'OBLIVION'
2. JASON CAN PLAY 'HALF-LIFE'
3. JASON CAN PLAY 'DUKE NUKEM FOREVER' SOMEDAY"...
I'LL DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR FATHER.
WOO-HOO!
WHAT'S THIS?
1,000 REASONS WHY WE SHOULDN'T BUY A NEW iFRUIT.
4-25

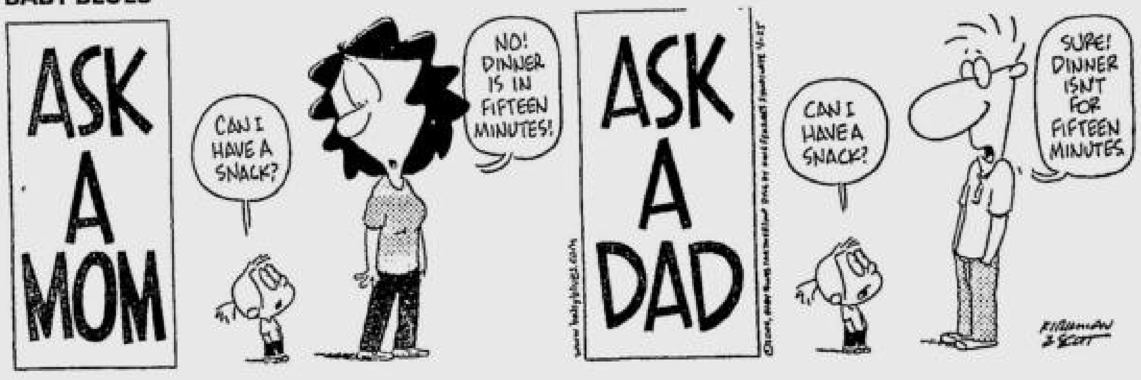
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


JUST SO YOU KNOW, KID, WHEN YOUR PARENTS AREN'T IN THE ROOM, I'M IN CHARGE
4-25 ARMSTRONG

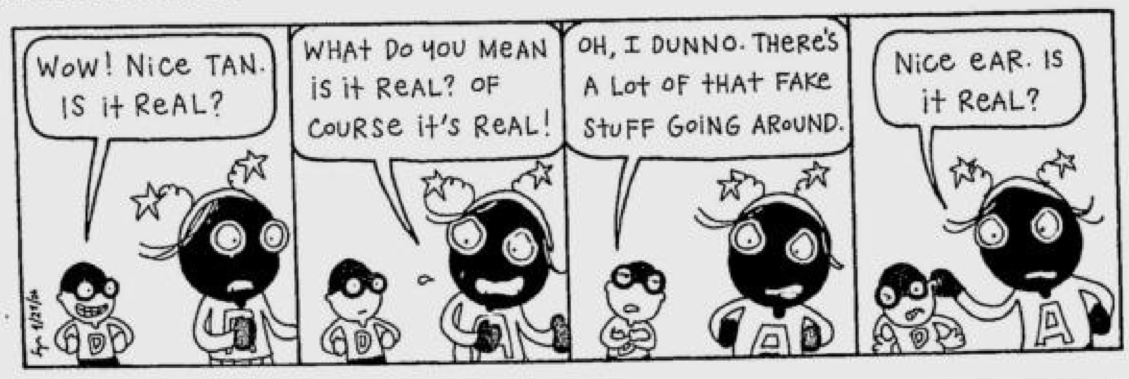
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ASK A MOM
CAN I HAVE A SNACK?
NO! DINNER IS IN FIFTEEN MINUTES!
ASK A DAD
CAN I HAVE A SNACK?
SURE! DINNER ISN'T FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES.
www.babyblues.com
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WoW! NiCe TAN. IS it ReAL?
WHAt Do you MeAN is it ReAL? OF CouRSe it's ReAL!
OH, I DUNNO. THeRe's A Lot OF tHAt FAKe StuFF GoiNG ARouND.
NiCe eAR. IS it ReAL?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're intellectually bright. You're both idealistic and practical. You have strong opinions. You appreciate beauty, yet you're naturally thrifty. You like to be well-organized. By age 26, you begin to take studies and learning more seriously. You want to enlighten the world. Many new possibilities await you this year. All you have to do is choose one.

Birthdate of: Talia Shire, actress; Renee Zellweger, actress; Al Pacino, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): It's important to remember that this year the universe will be generous to you. Inheritances, gifts, goodies, favors and advantages from others will come your way.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your closest relationships and partnerships are rewarding for you now. You truly value someone who is close to you. You feel loved. (And, indeed, you are.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Be constantly vigilant for ways to improve your job and your health this year, because you can do it! Do not limit your possibilities with negative expectations. Dream big.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): More than any sign, you get all the goodies this year! Vacations, love affairs, artistic opportunities and joyful experiences with children are just some of the pleasures coming your way. Financial speculation looks good too!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Family and home are particularly rewarding for you now. In fact, this extends to real estate as well. You feel enriched in your personal life, in practically every way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Everything begins with a thought. First the thought, then the deed. The deed becomes habit, and habit hardens into character. Your thoughts are who you are. This year, your thoughts are positive and optimistic!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): On the whole, you will earn more money this year. You will also spend more money, so that by the end of 2006, your assets will have increased.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Once every 12 years, lucky Jupiter is in your sign. That is happening for you now. It will stay there until November. Enjoy your good fortune while it lasts.

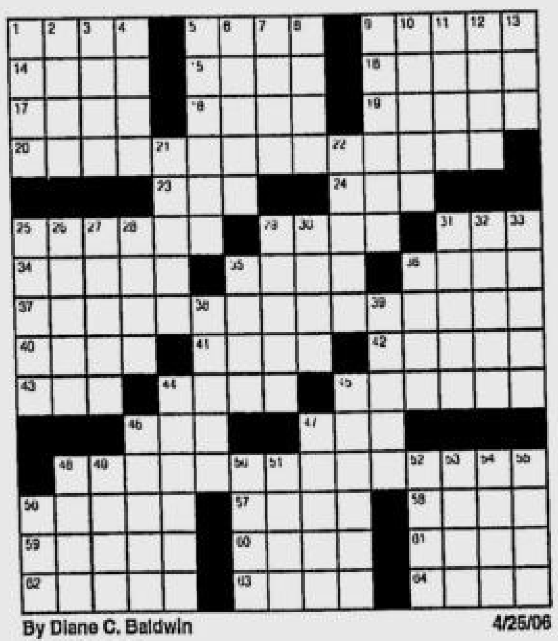
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): A number of things seem to open up new spiritual paths and ways of thinking for you. Since you are the philosopher of the zodiac, you welcome this opportunity to learn!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Popularity is pleasant (as you're finding out this year). Accept invitations. Join clubs and groups. Enjoy all your interactions with others.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your reputation and your good name get a wonderful boost. Bosses, VIPs, parents and teachers respect you more. Who doesn't want this?

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Opportunities to travel and explore publishing, the media and educational avenues will continue to come your way this year. Grab as much as you can!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD
4/25/06

ACROSS
1 Tiny tigers
5 Filled with wonder
9 Bewildered
14 Shrek, for one
15 Learning method
16 Emus' kin
17 Disembarked
18 Up in smoke
19 Boggy area
20 In deep space
23 Long in the tooth
24 Commercial blurbs
25 Have a lofty goal
29 Merry sounds
31 Harper Valley grp.
34 Sounds of anguish
35 Singular performances
36 Emerald Isle
37 Really in the sticks
40 Twilight times
41 Gravy base
42 Absolutely not!
43 Lipstick shade
44 Marianas Island
45 Walked deliberately
46 Skater Babilonia
47 Shad delicacy
48 Not visible from the crow's nest
56 Bakery loaf
57 Current
58 City on seven hills
59 Too tubby
60 Prevailing trend
61 Had down pat
62 Fluttery poplar
63 Battle souvenir
64 Dispatched

DOWN
1 Fossil fuel
2 Citrus hybrid
3 Ship's jail
4 Adam's third son
5 Fancy sock
6 Courted
7 Sicilian spouter
8 Bambi's folks
9 Warship assemblage
10 Spring occurrences
11 Antitoxins
12 Piece of cake!
13 Blond shade
21 Trunk
22 Hindu's sir
25 Fossil resin
26 Vino from Verona
27 Took measured steps
28 Loads a brayer
29 Not so interesting
30 Trebek or Karras
31 BYU location
32 Having prongs
33 Gide or Previn
35 Plato's portico
36 Peeping Tom
38 Apples and oranges
39 Computer command
44 Vegetable plot
45 More readily
46 Mock playfully
47 Valerie Harper role
48 Peepers
49 Second to a prez
50 Crude shelters
51 Tale of adventure
52 Irritates
53 Type of defense
54 Oracle's sign
55 Salamander
56 Slithery squeezer

Monday's Puzzle Solved

T	A	C	T	■	C	O	M	O	■	B	L	A	D	E
A	R	L	O	■	O	V	A	L	■	O	A	S	E	S
R	E	A	D	■	R	U	L	E	■	O	M	E	N	S
O	N	M	O	O	N	L	I	G	H	T	B	A	Y	■
S	A	P	■	V	E	E	■	■	A	E	S	■	■	■
■	■	■	D	I	A	S	T	O	L	E	■	W	E	N
P	A	E	A	N	■	■	I	R	E	■	B	O	R	E
O	N	T	H	E	W	A	T	E	R	F	R	O	N	T
E	N	O	L	■	H	A	H	■	■	A	I	D	E	S
M	O	N	■	F	I	R	E	P	L	U	G	■	■	■
■	■	■	S	U	N	■	■	R	A	N	■	P	L	O
■	O	N	T	H	E	R	O	A	D	A	G	A	I	N
A	N	E	A	R	■	A	M	I	D	■	N	U	N	S
F	L	A	K	E	■	M	I	S	E	■	A	L	E	E
T	Y	L	E	R	■	S	T	E	R	■	T	A	R	T

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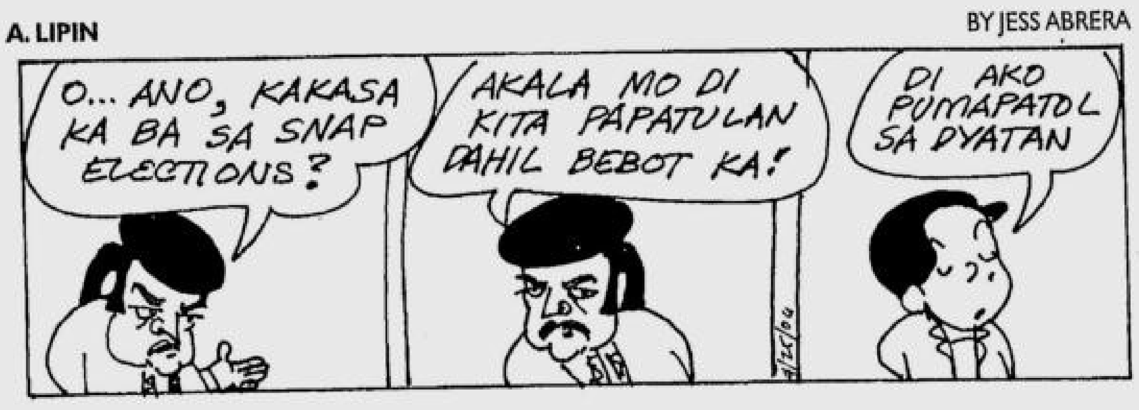
4/25/06

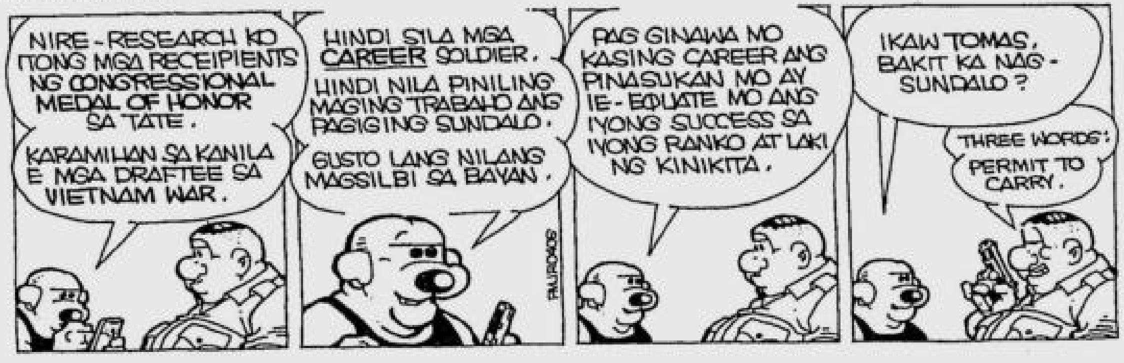
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


O... ANO, KAKASA KA BA SA SNAP ELECTIONS?
AKALA MO DI KITA PAPATULAN DAHIL BEBOT KA!
DI AKO PUMAPATOL SA DYATAN

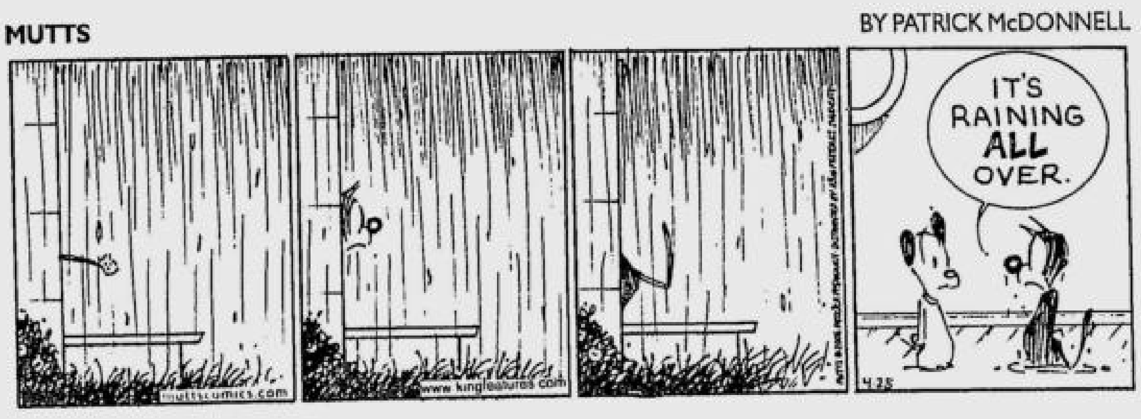
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NIRE-RESEARCH KO ITONG MGA RECEIPIENTS NG CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR SA TATE.
KARAMIHAN SA KANILA E MGA DRAFTEE SA VIETNAM WAR.
HINDI SILA MGA CAREER SOLDIER.
HINDI NILA PINILING MAGING TRABAHO ANG PAGIGING SUNDALO.
GUSTO LANG NILANG MAGSILBI SA BAYAN.
PAG GINAWA MO KASING CAREER ANG PINASUKAN MO AY IE-EQUATE MO ANG IYONG SUCCESS SA IYONG RANKO AT LAKI NG KINIKITA.
IKAW TOMAS, BAKIT KA NAG-SUNDALO?
THREE WORDS: PERMIT TO CARRY.

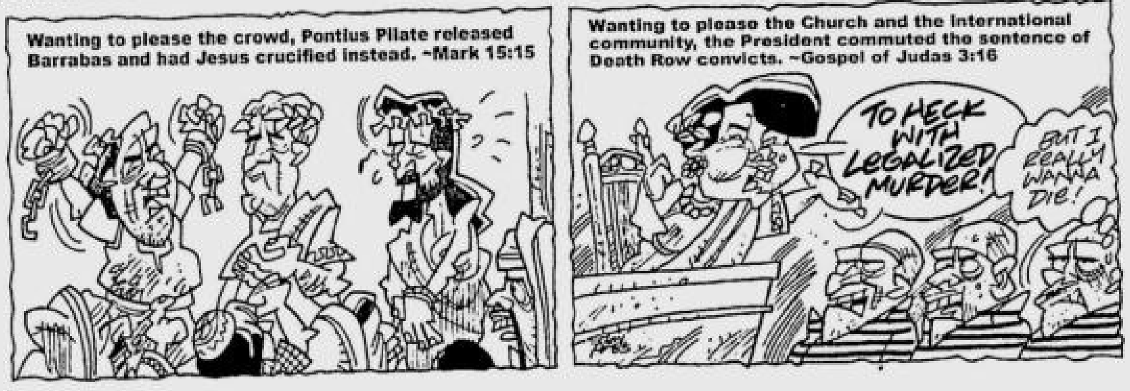
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


IT'S RAINING ALL OVER.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com

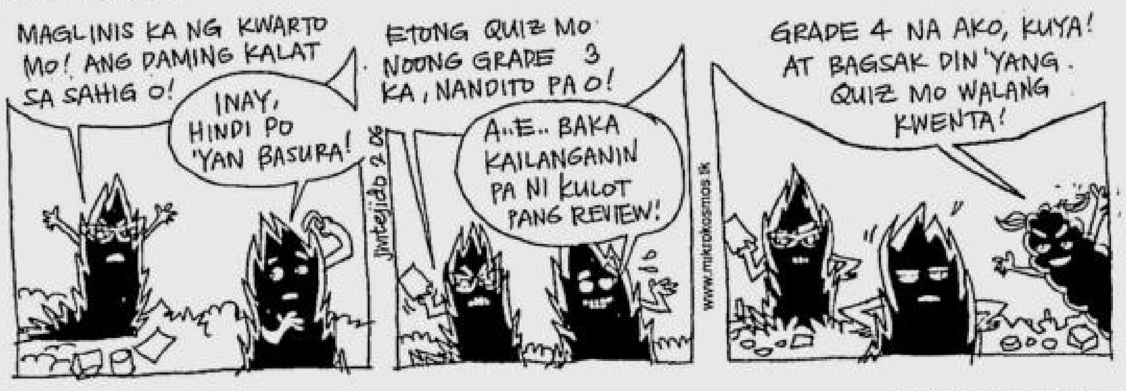
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


Wanting to please the crowd, Pontius Pilate released Barrabas and had Jesus crucified instead. ~Mark 15:15
Wanting to please the Church and the international community, the President commuted the sentence of Death Row convicts. ~Gospel of Judas 3:16
TO HECK WITH LEGALIZED MURDER!
BUT I REALLY WANNA DIE!

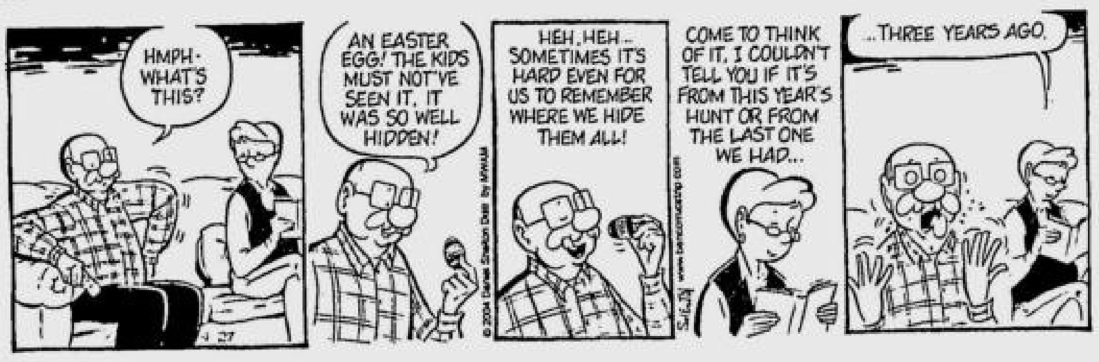
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MAGLINIS KA NG KWARTO MO! ANG DAMING KALAT SA SAHIG O!
INAY, HINDI PO 'YAN BASURA!
ETONG QUIZ MO NOONG GRADE 3 KA, NANDITO PA O!
A..E.. BAKA KAILANGANIN PA NI KULOT PANG REVIEW!
GRADE 4 NA AKO, KUYA! AT BAGSAK DIN 'YANG QUIZ MO WALANG KWENTA!
www.mikrokosmos.tk

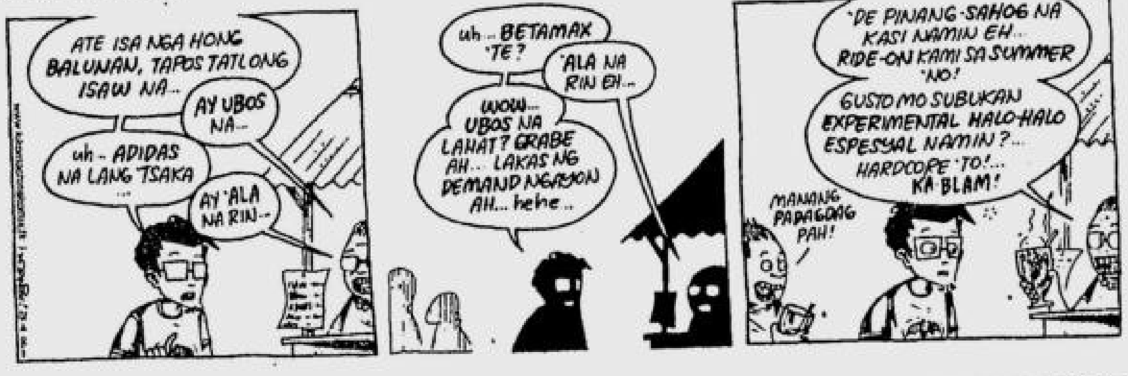
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HMPH. WHAT'S THIS?
AN EASTER EGG! THE KIDS MUST NOT'VE SEEN IT. IT WAS SO WELL HIDDEN!
HEH, HEH.. SOMETIMES IT'S HARD EVEN FOR US TO REMEMBER WHERE WE HIDE THEM ALL!
COME TO THINK OF IT, I COULDN'T TELL YOU IF IT'S FROM THIS YEAR'S HUNT OR FROM THE LAST ONE WE HAD...
...THREE YEARS AGO.

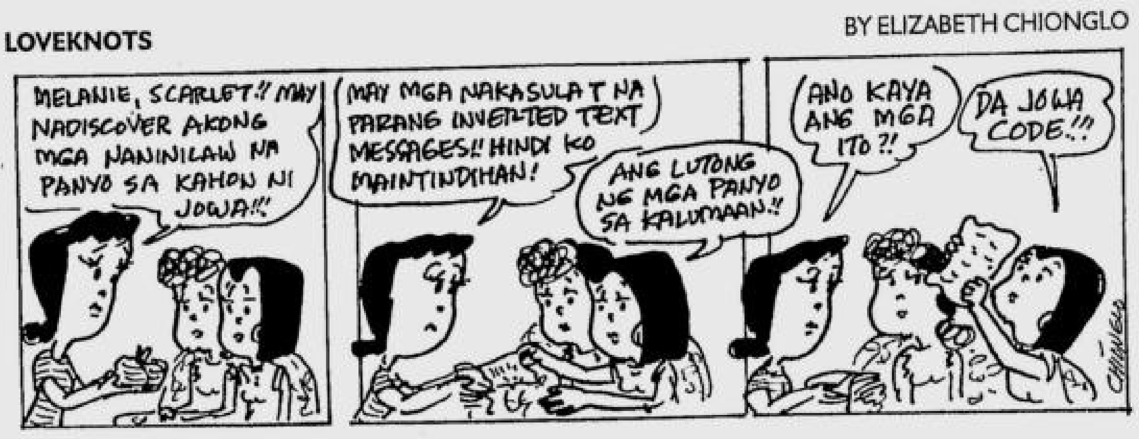
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ATE ISA NGA HONG BALUNAN, TAPOS TATLONG ISAW NA...
AY UBOS NA...
uh.. ADIDAS NA LANG TSAKA...
AY 'ALA NA RIN..
uh.. BETAMAX 'TE?
'ALA NA RIN EH...
WOW... UBOS NA LAHAT? GRABE AH.. LAKAS NG DEMAND NGAYON AH... hehe..
'DE PINANG-SAHOG NA KASI NAMIN EH.. RIDE-ON KAMI SA SUMMER 'NO!
GUSTO MO SUBUKAN EXPERIMENTAL HALO-HALO ESPESYAL NAMIN?.. HARDCORE 'TO!..
KA-BLAM!
MANONG PADAGDAG PAH!

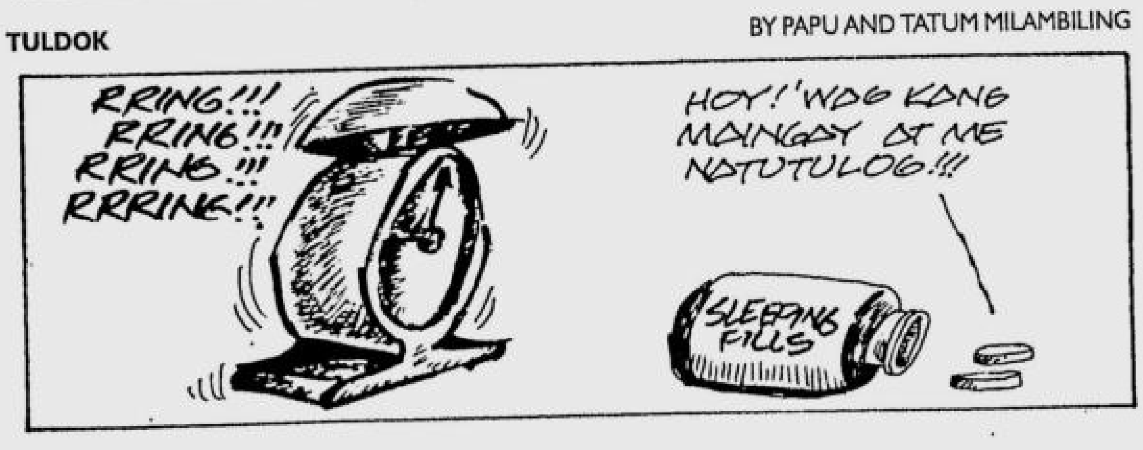
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MELANIE, SCARLET!! MAY NADISCOVER AKONG MGA NANINILAW NA PANYO SA KAHON NI JOWA!!
MAY MGA NAKASULAT NA PARANG INVERTED TEXT MESSAGES!! HINDI KO MAINTINDIHAN!
ANG LUTONG NG MGA PANYO SA KALUMAAN!!
ANO KAYA ANG MGA ITO?!
DA JOWA CODE!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


RRING!!! RRING!!! RRING!!! RRRING!!!
HOY! 'WAG KANG MAINGAY AT ME NATUTULOG!!!
SLEEPING PILLS

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

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Life after 'Bulaga!' for Sexbomb Girls

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

THERE'S LIFE AFTER "EAT BULAGA" for the Sexbomb Girls. Their soap "Daisy Siete" has begun its 11th season via the family drama titled "Nasaan Ka?"

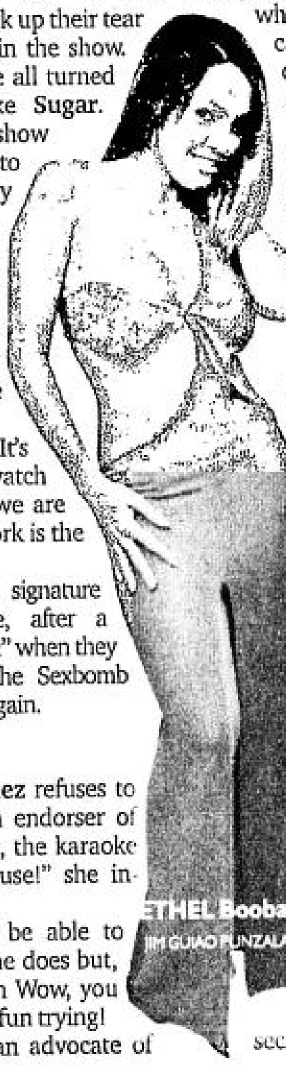
Nope, they're not looking for their fallen member, **Sugar Mercado**, who caused all that "EB" brouhaha. It's not your typical drama. The story has unusual twists.

Head writer **Gina Marissa Tagasa** says it's heartwarming but not heart-wrenching. **Rochelle Pangilinan, Jopay Paguia, Izzy Tirona** and the rest of the Sexbomb Girls work up their tear ducts to the max in the show. Not that they have all turned into crybabies like **Sugar**. They are out to show that there's more to them than sexy moves.

Since "Daisy Siete" airs right after "Eat," do they still watch the noontime show they used to be part of?

Jopay sighs, "It's still painful to watch 'Eat.' But slowly we are all moving on. Work is the best therapy."

Just like their signature "Spaghetti" dance, after a temporary "*pababa*" when they quit "Eat" now the Sexbomb girls are "*pataas*" again.



ETHEL Booba

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Muse, no less

REGINE **Velasquez** refuses to be called just an endorser of Wow Magic Sing, the karaoke mic. "I'm the muse!" she insists.

You may not be able to sing as well as she does but, Regine says, with Wow, you can try and have fun trying!

Wow is also an advocate of Philippine tourism. **Regine** explains: "It's the only karaoke that features 100 percent scenic Philippine spots. So while you're singing, feeling *mo* you're traveling, too. And you can take the mic with you wherever you go. Even in the car, just plug it in and you can have your own mini concert."

Isn't she wary of the new batch of singers from talent searches? "I don't feel pressured at all. In fact I'm flattered when someone is touted to be the next **Regine V.** There was a time when I was the one being groomed to be the next so and so. Passion for singing is something all Pinoys have. As my brother told me when I caught him singing—*Ang sarap kumanta lalo na pag di ka talaga singer, Ate.*" Oh yeah! Pass the mike please. Enough verbalizing. Let me vocalize…

Guess list

GUESS who these two former "Pinoy Big Brother" housemates are. One is from the first edition and the other is from the celeb version. They are keeping their budding romance hush hush. How long will it be a secret before Big Brother and the whole world starts to take notice? Will they end up being housemates in real life?

Guess who this lanky actress is who texted a TV host after she watched the interview of a singer/TV personality in a talk show! The message: "How plastic your guest is! Why is she saying that she never fought with any girl over a guy. She did that to me before when I was still on with [a matinee idol]!" In show biz you gotta be flexible—elastic—to go with the flow of "plastic" people that abound.

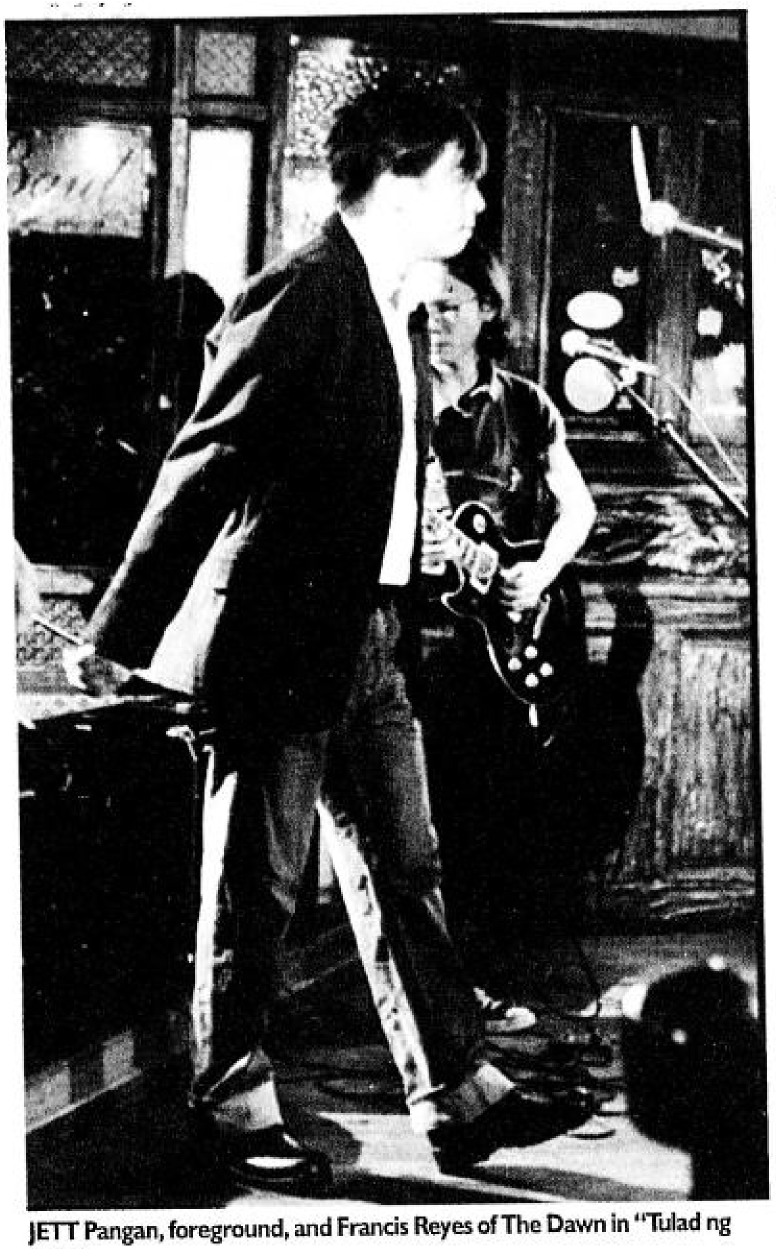
Just asking

WAS **Kris Aquino** offered to host "Mobile Kusina" by San Miguel Corp? I'm sure Tetay would have wanted to do it since she's one of the company's endorsers but perhaps ABS-CBN didn't allow her to do the GMA 7 cooking show, for obvious reasons. Now that she's Ms **James Yap**, she must be spending

LIFE/ A2-3

VELASQUEZ: Karaoke muse

AQUINO: Cooking for hubby?



JETT Pangan, foreground, and Francis Reyes of The Dawn in "Tulad ng Dati"

Seeing stars in … digital

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

MORE MAINSTREAM actors are starring in this year's Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival entries, said Robbie Tan, chair of the monitoring committee.

Tan provided INQUIRER Entertainment with a list.

"At least two stars, Meryll Soriano and Mark Gil, are appearing in two films," Tan said.

Soriano had so enjoyed working in last year's Cinemalaya entry, "Roomboy" (for which she won Best Actress), Tan added, that she readily accepted two entries this time—Ron Bryant's "Isang Ikot ng Mundo sa Rotonda" and Dado C. Lumibao and Bong Ramos' "In Da Red Korner" (formerly, "Ngipin ni Doring").

Gil, Soriano's costar in "Rotonda," has another entry, Adolfo Al ix Jr.'s "Donsol."

"The Gil family is well-represented this year," Tan said. "The lead actor in 'Donsol' is Sid Lucero, Mark's son [with actress Bing Pimentel]. Playing Sid's mother is Jaclyn Jose, Mark's former partner. Cherie Gil, Mark's sister, is also in the cast."

> The Gil clan is very well represented in Cinemalaya '06

Another Gil relative, Gina Alajar, is in Vic Acedillo Jr. and Benji Garcia's "Batad: Sa Paang Palay." Alajar is the wife of Lucero's uncle, Michael de Mesa, who starred in last year's "Big Time."

Tan jested, "It's a family affair."

Other stars in "Donsol" are Angel Aquino, Bembol Rocco,

SEEING/ A2-3

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Mixed feelings about 'Little Big Star'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE CAUGHT THE FINALS OF "LITTLE BIG STAR" on Channel 2 recently, and found it a generally perplexing viewing experience. It was supposed to be a contest for child singers, but the Little and Big division finalists were made to look and sing like small adults.

As a result, their youthful innocence was generally compromised, and the quality of their young singing voice was marred by the belting, growling and scatting that they were made to indulge in. Is this any way to run a singing contest for children?

The Big Division winner was Sam Concepcion. We have mixed feelings about his victory. During the tilt's first month, he was our best bet, because we really admired his "total performer" talent. He danced as well as he sang, and his projection was fresh, natural and intelligent.

By the time the finals were held, however, his voice appeared to have changed, perhaps due to the natural onset of adolescence. As a result, his singing wasn't as impressive as it used to be.

Based on singing talent (the show is a singing contest, after all), our best bet was Charice Pempengco.

Trouble was, she was made to look and sound too grown up, so the bloom was off the rose of her heretofore fresh and impressive talent.

Still, all pros and cons taken into consideration, Charice was still the most outstanding singer. Surprisingly and dispiritingly, she only placed third.

The Little Division went to Rhap Salazar, and we have no quarrel with that decision. Makisig Morales was reported to be the boy to beat in their category, But Rhap simply sang better than he did, so the title went to him.

Summing up, we can't really discuss in detail how Sam and Rhap came out on top in their respective divisions, since the total votes were a so-so combination of the seven jurors' verdicts and the text votes sent in by the viewers.

What we can more productively analyze, however, is how well the show has achieved its objective of discovering new child singers to enliven the local music scene.

Alas, the show gets low marks on this score, not because it hasn't discovered good talents, but because it's forgotten that it's a singing tilt for children.

Quite insensitively, it has encouraged its young talents to sing like little adults, choose songs with mature lyrics, wear heavy make-up, dangling earrings, etc.

All this robs the show and it's viewers of the freshness and sense of wonder that should be child singers' best gifts to their audience—and that's a big pity. When will they ever learn?

Eva Longoria

"Desperate Housewives" Eva Longoria plays her first big role in "The Sentinel," a political thriller that also stars Kiefer Sutherland and Michael Douglas.

Longoria is cast as Jill Marin, a tough and ambitious agent who's just graduated second in her class at the Secret Service Academy. Arriving for her first field posting, she joins others in uncovering what appears to be an inside job to assassinate the US president. There's a traitor in the ranks of the Secret Service!

The actress chose "The Sentinel" as her first major movie showcase because her role in it is so different from the character she plays in "Desperate Housewives."

"It's a triangle between Michael, Kiefer and me, but it isn't a love triangle," says Longoria. That's why I decided to do this movie. Jill is the complete opposite of Gabrielle (her TV character)."

From zeroes to heroes

In Columbia Pictures' new comedy, "The Benchwarmers," three underdogs (Rob Schneider, David Spade and Jon Heder) form a three-man basketball team to challenge a full squad of elementary school baseball bullies. Their success leads to a high-stakes, winner-take-all game with the best kids in the state. If they win, they will become an inspiration for every kid who has ever been a benchwarmer.

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③ SUBMERGE
MTRCB R-13
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④ TRISTAN & ISOLDE
MTRCB R-13
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GP

CINEMA 5 EIGHT BELOW
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R13

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D' LUCKY ONES GP 1:10,3:20,5:30, 7:30,10:00	SUBMERGED R13 1:35,3:45,5:55,8:05,10:15	ICE AGE 2 G 11:30,1:30,3:30, 5:30,7:30,9:30

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	2 D' LUCKY ONES	3 THX TRISTAN & ISOLDE 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 SUBMERGED	5 JUST FRIENDS	6 EIGHT BELOW	7 PAMAHIIN
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 EIGHT BELOW	2 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX EIGHT BELOW 1:20, 3:50, 6:20, 8:50, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 RENT 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 TRISTAN & ISOLDE 1:20, 3:50, 6:20, 8:50, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	
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	3 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	4 PAMAHIIN	5 TRISTAN & ISOLDE	
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M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 D' LUCKY ONES	2 SUBMERGED		
	3 PAMAHIIN	4 EIGHT BELOW	5 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	

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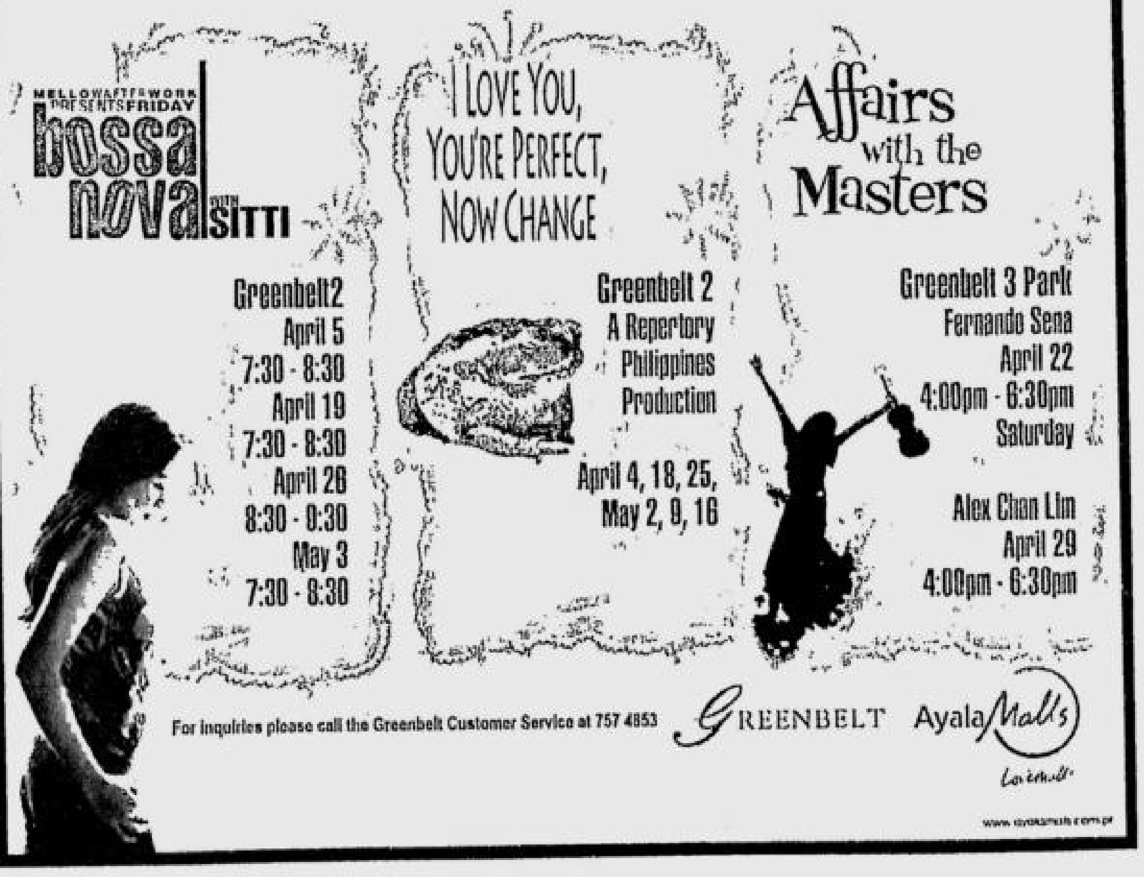

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Seeing stars in ... digital

From page A2-1

Simon Ibarra and ABS-CBN child star Aaron Junatas.

Aquino topbilled last year's "ICU Bed # 7."

Alix recounted that he was initially daunted about working with veteran actors. "But they didn't make me feel like I was a first-time director. They were all cooperative, no matter how challenging the shooting conditions were in Sorsogon. They treated it as work and vacation at the same time."

In "Rotonda," Soriano and Gil are sharing the screen with Epy Quizon, Mario Magallona, Emilio Garcia and filmmaker Celso Ad. Castillo.

Bryant counts Castillo as mentor. "I started with him, as scriptwriter in his two films 'Virgin People 3' and 'Sanib,'" he recounted.

Bryant said he thought of casting Magallona and Garcia after seeing another digital film "Dilim," a finalist in the Cinema One film fest.

All professional

"They are all professional and easy to work with," said Bryant.

Other mainstream stars in the festival films are Johnny Delgado and Boots Anson-Roa (Nick Joseph Olanka's "Ang Huling Araw ng Linggo"); Kathleen Hermosa and Aiza Marquez ("In Da Red Korner"); Rio Locsin and Roxanne Barcelo (Arah Jell Badayos' "Mudraks," formerly "Lima"); Caridad Sanchez, Ricky Davao, Darling Laviña, Rez Cortez and Nonie Buencamino (in Florida Bautista and Real Florido's "Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?"); and Niño Muhlach and Mengie Cobarrubias are lending their voices to Khavn de la Cruz's animated film "Larombata."

The Dawn lead vocalist Jett Pangan is playing himself in Michael Sandejas' "Tulad ng Dati." Pangan's bandmates—drummer JB Leonor, guitarist Francis Reyes and bassists Caloy Balcells and Buddy Zabala—are also portraying themselves, with Agot Isidro as Pangan's wife and Ping Medina as the late guitarist Teddy Diaz.

Sandejas said that Medina has a unique kinship with Diaz: "They are of the same height. They are both Ateneans (college). They're both sons of actors (Vic Diaz and Pen Medina). They both play the guitar."

"I joined a band formed by high-school friends from San Beda," Medina said.

The actor, who earned raves in last year's "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," admitted that he feels pressured portraying "a legendary musician. But I try not to dwell on that. I focus on the work. It's exciting."

MARK Gil's son Sid Lucero (mother: Bing Pimentel) in "Donsol."

MARK is in "Rotonda."

Life ...

From page A2-1

more time in the kitchen whipping up hubby's fave dishes, huh?

What were **Joey Marquez** and **Alicia Mayer** up to in Boracay? Heard that they checked in then checked out the next day in one resort and moved to another hotel? They jumped from one resort to another. Did they want a different ambience every night to spice things up? Or maybe they were hoping for a little more privacy each time. But that's unthinkable when you're in Bora for *Holy* Week. With all the paparazzi around, "*Huling*-holy *kayo*!"

Juicy, juicy

An eyewitness in Bora texted me these juicy stories: "Another unpublished, unaired scene of **Ethel Booba**: During the Globe party she was so hungry for attention! She was gyrating in front of all the people gleefully taking pix and videos of her. She would hump on a guy, simulating the sex act. [And that was on] Black Saturday! Afterwards she ran from the venue to the beach where she took a dip with friends."

This, too: "**Gwen Garci** claims she was with family (on the island). I saw **Andrew Wolfe** afterwards. **Gwen** says she was shocked to find out **Andrew** there, too. Finally, I saw them together. Don't know what cheap reason there was for their denials."

Star texts

From **Monsour del Rosario**: "Hi! I'm in Bangkok, Thailand with the RP taekwondo team for the Asian Taekwondo championships. Our new show, 'TKD TV,' will start airing on RPN 9 May 7, 9:30 a.m."

From **Angeli Valenciano**: "By God's grace, **Maricel Laxa-Pangilinan** graduated from UP Diliman last April 22 with a masters degree in Family Life & Child Development. Good news for a change!"

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)

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2	ICE AGE 2 12:20, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:30	G
3	EIGHT BELOW 12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:00	GP
4	JUST FRIENDS 1:20, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30	R-13

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MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	ICE AGE 2 12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:20	BASIC INSTINCT 2 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	EIGHT BELOW 3:50 / 8:50 ICE AGE 2 1:20 / 6:20
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX	PAMAHIIN 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45	EIGHT BELOW 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

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MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:00 R3 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40	EIGHT BELOW 12:25 / 2:55 / 5:25 / 7:55	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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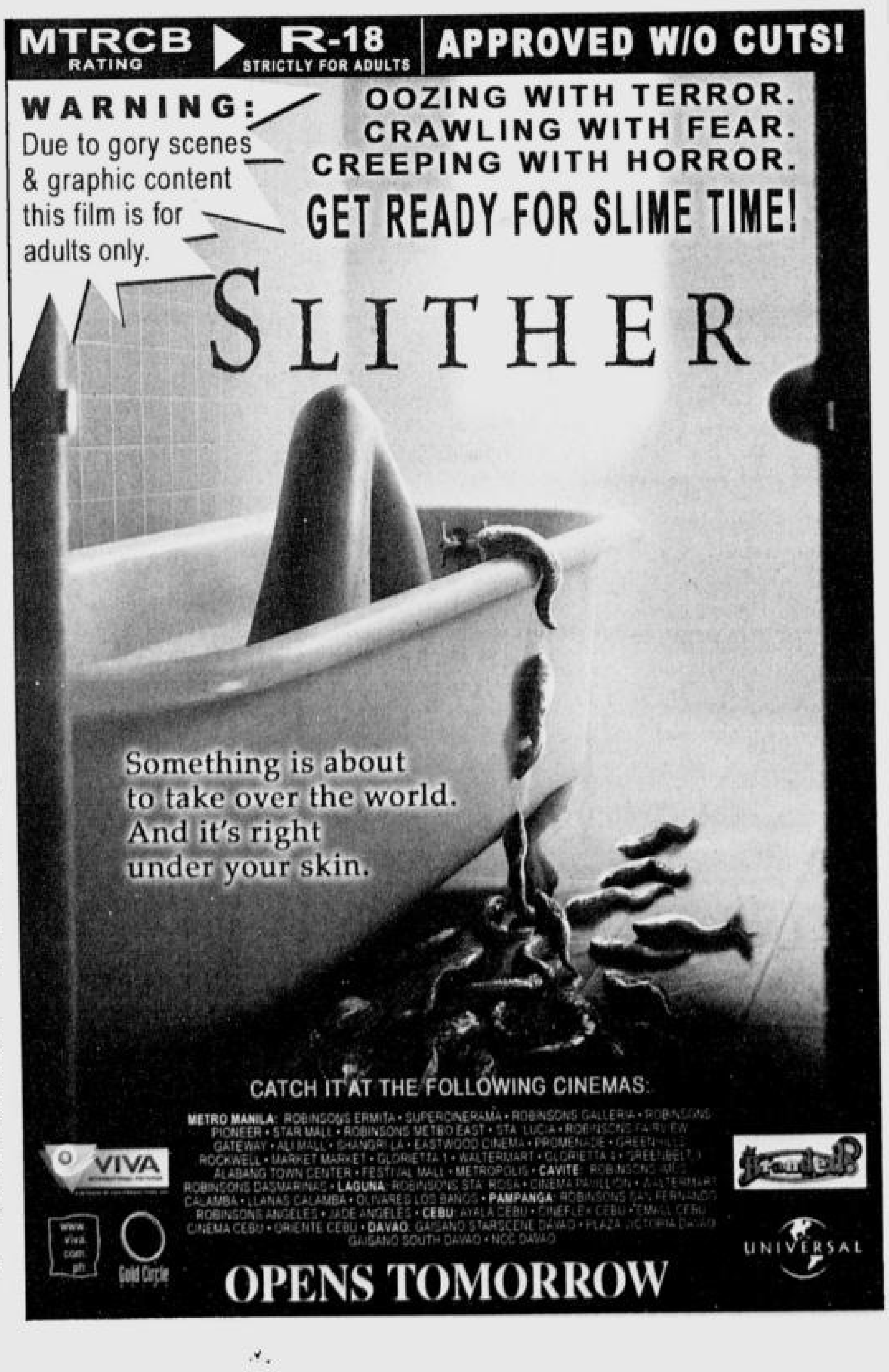

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2 (SDDS) BANDIDAS
3 (DTS) THE HILLS HAVE EYES
4 GOLD (DTS) TRITAN & ISOLDE
5 GOLD (DOLBY) EIGHT BELOW
6 GOLD (SDDS) BASIC INSTINCT-2
7 GOLD (DOLBY) ICE AGE-2
8 MOMENTS OF LOVE
9 PAMAHIIN
10 D' LUCKY ONES

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2 (DOLBY) ICE AGE 2
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4 (DOLBY) JUST FRIENDS

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2 PAMAHIIN
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1 D' LUCKY ONES
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2 D' LUCKY ONES
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3 (DOLBY) ULTRAVIOLET
4 (DTS) ICE AGE-2

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
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3 (DOLBY) PAMAHIIN

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1 PAMAHIIN
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3 D' LUCKY ONES
4 TRISTAN & ISOLDE

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2 (DOLBY) D' LUCKY ONES
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4 PAMAHIIN
5 EIGHT BELOW

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 PAMAHIIN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 COED SCANDAL

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1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 THE HILLS OF EYES
3 BASIC INSTINCT-2
4 16 BLOCKS

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1 COED SCANDAL
2 PAMAHIIN
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 D' LUCKY ONES

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1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 BANDIDAS
3 PAMAHIIN

Lianas Cinema (Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 UTRAVIOLET

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3 D' LUCKY ONES
4 KISKISAN
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1 EIGHT BELOW
2 THE HILLS OF EYES

THEATRES
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1 NANNY MCPHEE
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D' LUCKY ONES

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 D' LUCKY ONES
4 PAMAHIIN

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1 EIGHT BELOW
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
4 PAMAHIIN

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
1 PAMAHIIN
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 ICE AGE-2
2 PAMAHIIN

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BANDIDAS
2 ROOM SERVICE

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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 BASIC INSTINCT 2 • THX
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

2 PAMAHIIN
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 SUBMERGED
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

4 THE COOLER
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

5 D' LUCKY ONES
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

6 EIGHT BELOW
11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00

7 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

8 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

9 ICE AGE 2
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

10 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 ICE AGE 2
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 9:50

2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3 AMERICAN SOLDIER 12:35 3:00
BASIC INSTINCT 2 5:15 7:35 10:00

4 PAMAHIIN
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 SUBMERGED
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

6 EIGHT BELOW
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

7 D' LUCKY ONES
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

2 ICE AGE 2
12:20 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00

3 D' LUCKY ONES
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

4 BASIC INSTINCT 2
12:20 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00

5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

6 MOMENTS OF LOVE
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

7 EIGHT BELOW
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

8 PAMAHIIN
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

NOVALICHES 936-3231 / 936-3229-30

1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 PAMAHIIN
5 BASIC INSTINCT 2

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 SUBMERGED
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 PAMAHIIN
4 D' LUCKY ONES

WILLIAM H MACY MARIA BELLO ALEC BALDWIN

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the cooler

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1 NORTH COUNTRY
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 PAMAHIIN
4 D' LUCKY ONES

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1 EIGHT BELOW
2 PAMAHIIN
3 NORTH COUNTRY
4 D' LUCKY ONES
5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 EIGHT BELOW
2 BASIC INSTINCT 2
3 PAMAHIIN
4 D' LUCKY ONES
5 NORTH COUNTRY

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D' LUCKY ONES
4 EIGHT BELOW

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 PAMAHIIN
2 GRANDMA'S BOY
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 D' LUCKY ONES

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 PAMAHIIN
4 BASIC INSTINCT 2
5 JUST FRIENDS
6 EIGHT BELOW

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 EIGHT BELOW
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 ULTRAVIOLET
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
5 HOUSE OF FURY
6 ICE AGE 2

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 PAMAHIIN
4 EIGHT BELOW
5 SHE'S THE MAN
6 NANNY MCPHEE

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METRO MANILA

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CINEMA 1
ICE AGE 2
CINEMA 2
EIGHT BELOW

SM MEGACINEMA
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 BANDIDAS
3 ICE AGE 2
4 RESERVED
5 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
6 SUBMERGED
7 JUST FRIENDS
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3
9 PAMAHIIN
10 D LUCKY ONES
11 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12 AMERICAN SOLDIERS

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 SUBMERGED
3 PAMAHIIN
4 ICE AGE 2
5 BANDIDAS
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE
7 D LUCKY ONES
8 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 PAMAHIIN
2 ICE AGE 2
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 BANDIDAS
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 EIGHT BELOW
5 D LUCKY ONES
6 PAMAHIIN
7 SUBMERGED
8 MOMENTS OF LOVE
9 ICE AGE 2
10 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
11 VENOM
12 AMERICAN SOLDIERS

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 ICE AGE 2
2 SUBMERGED
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 PAMAHIIN
5 D LUCKY ONES
6 VENOM
7 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
8 BANDIDAS
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 JUST FRIENDS

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 ICE AGE 2
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 ICE AGE 2
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 D LUCKY ONES
6 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY MANILA
1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 VENOM
3 SUBMERGED
4 ICE AGE 2
5 BANDIDAS
6 EIGHT BELOW
7 PAMAHIIN
8 SHE'S THE MAN
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11 AMERICAN SOLDIERS
12 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 ICE AGE 2
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 PAMAHIIN
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
7 SUBMERGED
8 VENOM
9 AMERICAN SOLDIERS

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 PAMAHIIN
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 ICE AGE 2
4 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY SUCAT
1 ICE AGE 2
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 EIGHT BELOW

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2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY MARILAO
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 PAMAHIIN
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY BACOOR
1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 ICE AGE 2
3 PAMAHIIN
4 EIGHT BELOW
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 D LUCKY ONES
7 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
8 JUST FRIENDS

SM CITY STA. ROSA
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 ICE AGE 2
3 PAMAHIIN
4 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 PAMAHIIN
2 JUST FRIENDS
3 EIGTH BELOW
4 ICE AGE 2
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY LUCENA
1 ICE AGE 2
2 PAMAHIIN
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY MOLINO
1 D LUCKY ONES
2 PAMAHIIN
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 ICE AGE 2

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 SHAGGY DOG
3 ULTRAVIOLET
4 EIGHT BELOW
5 PAMAHIIN
6 ICE AGE 2
7 D LUCKY ONES
8 ULTRAVIOLET

SM CITY ILOILO
1 SHE'S THE MAN
2 RESERVED
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 ULTRAVIOLET
5 PAMAHIIN
6 ICE AGE 2
7 RESERVED
8 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY DAVAO
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 CHINESE TALL STORY
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 JUST FRIENDS
5 SHAGGY DOG
6 ULTRAVIOLET

SM CITY CAGAYAN
1 BANDIDAS
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 ICE AGE 2

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING MTRCB RATING SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

FEEDBACK

Winners, winners!

THE STARS OF '66 IN our April 19 quiz are (from left in the photograph): Boy Alano, Sarah Calvin, Shirley Moreno, German Moreno, Ramil Rodriguez, Blanca Gomez, Jose Morelos, Rosemarie Sonora, Pepito Rodriguez, Edgar Salcedo and Nori Dalisay.

And the winners are **Rommel C. Reyes** of Concepcion, Malabon; **Marietta M. Adriano** of Parañaque City; and **Eloisa C. Mangulabnan** of San Fernando, Pampanga.

Rommel, Marietta and Eloisa sent the first correct answers.

INQUIRER Entertainment received more than 50 entries by e-mail, from readers as far away as Dipolog and Zamboanga in the south and Tuguegarao in the north.

The winners will please come to the INQUIRER offices within the week, except Thursday, to claim your prizes.

Call Kat Reyes, 897-8808 loc. 363.

Why show 'Da Vinci'?

From Eva Rodriguez (emrod3@yahoo.com), UP Diliman:

Why are we showing "Da Vinci Code" in the Philippines when we are a Christian nation? Aside from the errors he committed in art and historical fact, Dan Brown presents Jesus Christ as a mere man whose divinity is determined by man's election. This is very much against our Christian belief—I would dare say even blasphemous.

As a Catholic, I'm calling on MTRCB and all Christian communities and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, to do everything possible to stop the showing of "The Da Vinci Code" here. Or at least provide the faithful with guidelines as to how it should be digested.

I agree

From Henry Estrada (henry.estrada@wfp.org), Rome, Italy:

I fully agree (along with regular viewers here in Italy) that Charisse should have been declared the "brightest" in "Little Big Star."

She's so gifted and her singing style, projection, confidence and voice quality would put to shame many other singers!

Me, too

From Mars Sahulga (sahulga@gmx.net), Florianigasse 70, 1080, Vienna:

I support the Feedback of Edison David regarding the results of the "Little Big Star." A lot of immigrants here in Vienna watch the show. This is to inform the management of the ABS-CBN that we are very disappointed! Charisse should have won.

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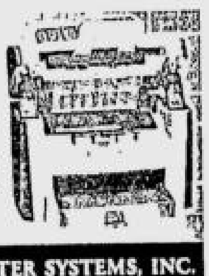

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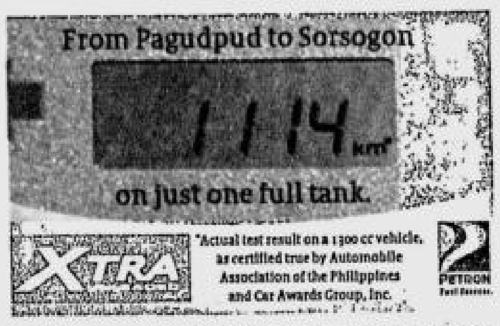

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PETRON

GMA extends SPV law by 2 years

MEGAWORLD chair Andrew Tan briefs President Macapagal-Arroyo on the property firm's projects in Fort Bonifacio after the ceremonial ringing of the opening bell at the Philippine Stock Exchange. Megaworld listed yesterday the additional shares it offered to international investors. LYN RILLON

Buyers of banks' soured assets to get tax perks

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERday signed into law a measure reviving tax breaks for buyers of banks' soured assets for another two years, a move which officials hope will spur more sales of bad loans.

Ms Arroyo signed the law amending the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Act at the Philippine Stock Exchange amid cheers from lawmakers, government officials and business executives before ringing the opening bell to start the day's trading.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has said it expected commercial banks to sell more than P100 billion worth of bad loans over the next two years.

Under the amended law, the deadline for the creation of asset management firms entitled to tax breaks will be 18 months from when it takes effect, which is expected shortly. The original deadline was Sept. 19, 2004.

The original law, which expired in April 2005, exempted buyers of banks' assets from paying certain transaction-related and withholding taxes. It also halved certain transfer and land registration fees. These included the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and VAT (expanded value-added tax).

The previous SPV law allowed banks to clean up about P95 billion in bad assets before it expired April last year.

Officials have said that if all soured assets were unloaded, the bad loan ratio of Philippine banks should fall from around 8.3 percent of total loans to 6.5 percent, although that would still be higher than the 4 percent

GMA/ B2

10-YEAR EXPANSION PLAN

Megaworld allots ₱47B for new projects

PROPERTY DEVELOPER MEGAworld Corp. said it will spend roughly P47 billion over the next 7 to 10 years, mostly to build office spaces catering to the expanding call center industry, Megaworld chair and president Andrew Tan said yesterday.

Following the company's ceremonial listing of additional shares at the Philippine Stock Exchange in Ayala, Makati City, Tan said that over the next five years, Megaworld will build 400,000 square meters of business process outsourcing (BPO)-ready offices, good for 176,000 call center workers on its flagship project at Eastwood City in Libis, on McKinley Hill in Fort Bonifacio and on Newport City in Pasay City.

Of the P47 billion, some P20 billion will be spent for these BPO-related offices and retail properties to expand rental income.

Tan said 80 percent of the proceeds from its recent public offer of primary and secondary shares would be used to build the BPO office spaces, which will position the company as a leading player in BPO office development and the residential condominium market.

"We will take Megaworld to the next level and further enhance its value," Tan said during his speech at Megaworld's listing rites at the Ayala trading floor.

Megaworld raised a total of P5.4 billion for itself and selling shareholder US investment fund Colony-CB Richard Ellis, from a public offer of 3.9 billion primary and secondary shares at P1.38 each. It was the first property company to return to the capital market for funds since the

MEGAWORLD/ B2

91-day T-bill rate up slightly to 4.62%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BELLWETHER 91-DAY TREASURY BILL rate inched up slightly to 4.62 percent yesterday after nearly reaching a four-year low last week as investors chose to bid for securities that gave them higher yields.

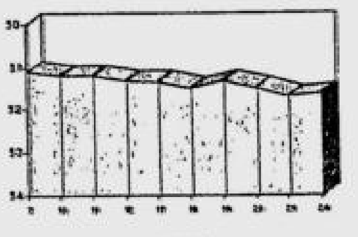
The new rate for the 91-day bills was 2 basis points higher than the 4.6 percent recorded during last week's auctions.

The three-month government securities were still oversubscribed, with tenders reaching P1.62 billion, but the amount of bids for

91-DAY/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱51.635 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 24, 2006

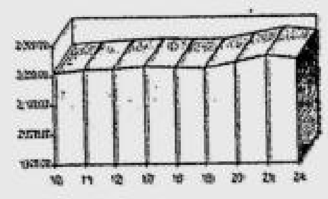
¥117.61 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 21, 2006

GOLD: $632.50-633.00

per ounce Hong Kong, April 24, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Stocks down on profit-taking

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.55-PERCENT lower yesterday as soaring oil prices sparked a round of profit-taking after the market hit near seven-year highs, dealers said.

They said the correction was to have been expected and the latest spike in oil prices to above $75 a barrel provided the excuse but overall the tone remained positive, with investors expecting strong first-quarter corporate results.

STOCKS/ B2

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Cebu makes big push as investment, tourism hub

Execs say island to rival Metro Manila

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND the private sector in Cebu yesterday kicked off efforts to push for the further development of the island province as an investment and tourism hub that will rival Metro Manila.

Provincial and city officials gathered with representatives of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry with the Metro Manila launch of the 11th Cebu Business Month (CBM) at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City. CBM was launched in Cebu City last March.

Wilson P. Ng, chair of CBM 2006, said the festivities had been an effective crowd-drawer for local entrepreneurs as well as international businesses and that it had "accorded a big boost" to the economy in the Visayas.

Themed "Invest Cebu," this year's CBM will promote the province as an investment haven in the country with tourism and information and communication technology ventures as main drivers of growth.

"We are promoting the concept of Greater Cebu, which means Cebu would not only be an end destination but would also be a catalyst in promoting the general area (of the Visayas)," Ng said.

Ng said the festival was also aimed at promoting the role of small- and medium-sized enterprises in enhancing Cebu's global competitiveness.

Joel Mari Yu, head of the Cebu Investment Promotions Center, said Cebu accounted for $4.7 billion in exports last year or about 10 percent of the country's total export earnings.

"That is an improvement from about $3 billion five years ago and it is quite significant considering that we represent just 4 percent of the country's entire population," Yu said.

He said foreign direct investments had grown in number from about 200 in 2001 to at least 300 last year. However, he did not give the amounts of investments.

"Cebu is very accessible from other countries with daily flights to and from Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur," Yu said. "There are also flights to and from Seoul, Taipei and Qatar thrice a week."

Yu said Cebu was very competitive in that the cost of handling a container of cargo is just half of what it costs in Manila's sea ports while housing expenses for foreign executives were 20 percent to 50 percent cheaper than in the national capital.

"As for labor cost, minimum wage in Cebu is just P215 a day compared to P320 in Metro Manila," he added.

Million tanks to you

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

UNKNOWN TO ITS MILLIONS OF WORKing-class, hard-up members, the SSS is maintaining a costly office on Ayala Ave. in Makati.

To everybody in the real estate sector, that is the most expensive street in the most expensive business district in the most expensive city in this country.

Now the benefits that the SSS gives out to the members have not improved much under the present management, headed by its president Corazon dela Paz.

Yet the SSS, from what I heard from insiders, spends for the high-end office anywhere from P2 million to P4 million a month.

And to top this, the SSS is NOT the one using it. Occupying the multimillion-peso rented office is an international organization based in Switzerland.

My info is that it is an association of pension funds. It so happens that Dela Paz is also the president of the international organization.

On behalf of the millions of SSS members, here's a little question: Did the commissioners of the SSS approve the use of SSS funds for the office?

* * *

FROM WHAT we hear, anyway, being the president of that "international organization," Dela Paz has been travelling a lot abroad during the past two years or so.

And guess what, insiders are claiming that she has also been charging those travels to the SSS.

Her absences are well known inside the SSS. Thus, to do her hands-on job, she hired highly paid consultants—THREE of them.

They are Arturo San Gabriel, Luisito Sioson and Nazario Cabuquit, each getting a "salary" of P150,000 a month—or about P1.8 million a year.

Many of the SSS members cannot call that amount "salary." It is, to them, a fortune. Many of them do not even earn half of that amount in a year.

Are you telling us that Malacañang does not even move even a little finger against what could be a brazen display of graft? And what is the Ombudsman doing?

Look, those same poor members pay for the salaries of the "consultants" who are doing the job of the president who, in turn, spends the members' money on travels abroad and a first-class office on Ayala Avenue in Makati.

Let me see if I get it right: The SSS members are subsidizing the "international organization" with rich countries for its members.

* * *

THIS IS the same SSS that, unlike the other pension fund GSIS, is putting its millions of members at a disadvantage in the country's 3rd biggest bank, Equitable PCI Bank.

The SSS and the GSIS sank P20 billion of our money in the bank. That's probably why the SM group of mall operator Henry Sy wants to take over the bank.

In a rather "wise" move, you see, the group of Henry Sy wants to takes over EPCIB without paying for the GSIS and SSS holdings in the bank.

We are talking here about one of the very few local taipans, those multibillionaires who actually came from humble beginnings.

Stories abound about how Henry Sy started with just a small shoe store on Carriedo St. in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Within his lifetime, the hardworking Henry Sy was able to parlay his hole-in-the-wall store into a chain of huge malls (among others) that the SM group is known for today.

In fact, Henry Sy gets all sorts of awards and recognition for such a lifetime achievement.

Just recently, the local office of Hong Kong Bank (HSBC) named him one of the all-time greats in Philippine entrepreneurship.

And now this controversial "takeover" of EPCIB. So what's wrong in this picture?

* * *

I MEAN, the same revered SM group of the same admired Henry Sy wants to take over a bank in which the working class has so much at stake.

And it seems that all that the SM group has to do is use political influence.

The Palace, under this cute administration, is not lifting a finger to fight the SM group's plan for its own Banco de Oro (9th largest) to swallow up the whole of EPCIB (3rd largest).

GMA extends SPV law ...

From page B1

before the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98.

"Our medium-term objective is to bring down the NPL ratio to pre-crisis or 1997 levels of 4 percent," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

The country's bad loan ratio peaked at 18.81 percent in October 2001.

The new law, aimed at freeing up banks' resources to spur more lending and economic growth, broadens the coverage of soured assets eligible for investment and tax perks to those that became nonperforming at the end of 2004 from June 30, 2002, under the original law.

Commercial banks' nonperforming loans stood at P158.68 billion as of the end of February, down 1.5 percent from P161.12 billion in January.

Witnessing the signing of the SPV amendment were Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, and Representatives Jaime Lopez, Jose Carlos Lacson and Luis Villafuerte. *With a report from Reuters*

Stocks ...

From page B1

The composite index fell 12.49 points to 2,250.48 after trading between 2,243.08 and 2,264.84. Turnover was 3.91 billion shares worth P2.29 billion.

Losers led gainers 59 to 35, with 53 stocks unchanged.

"Profit-taking has finally emerged but the pullback was limited as overall sentiment remains positive despite the threat of rising oil prices to economic growth," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities. *AFP*

Megaworld allots ₱47B for new projects

From page B1

Asian crisis in 1997.

Of the total P5.4 billion, Megaworld raised P4.8 billion from a primary offering of 3.5 billion shares.

Megaworld has an option to issue additional 588.5 million shares which has yet to be exercised at the discretion of its underwriters.

Megaworld closed at P1.44 a share yesterday. Although down from its previous close of P1.56 last April 6 in the stock market, it was still up 4 percent from the offer price of P1.38. Megaworld's shares were under a two-week trading halt from April 7 to 21 in line with its public offering.

President Macapagal-Arroyo graced Megaworld's listing at the Ayala trading floor yesterday, ringing the opening bell at 9:10 a.m., 20 minutes before the market's official morning run. Ms Macapagal also signed at the trading floor yesterday amendments to the Special Purpose Vehicle law. *(See story on this page B1)*

Aside from BPO office spaces, Megaworld is launching in the third quarter its $137-million mass transit-oriented residential condominium project dubbed "Manhattan Garden City." Linked to the MRT-3 and LRT-2 mass transit lines at the Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City, Manhattan Garden will consist of 17 towers and 6,000 units on a four-hectare site. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

91-day T-bill rate up slightly

From page B1

the 91-day bills was still much lower than those for the 182- and 364-day government securities.

Tenders for the 182-day paper reached P3.43 billion, while that for the 364-day bills amounted to P4.96 billion. The government borrows P1 billion for each maturity during the auctions. The Bureau of Treasury's auction committee accepted P3 billion worth of bids.

The six-month and one-year securities both fetched lower rates, with the 182-day rate settling at 5.337 percent, 16.2 basis points lower than last week's, and the 364-day yield ending 28 basis points lower at 5.81 percent.

"As expected, the market showed its preference for longer-dated bills, which could give them greater yields. The supply (of T-bills) is still very limited compared with demand," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in a briefing after the auctions.

He said there were P4.56 billion worth of maturing government securities this week, an amount seen to add up to the market's already high liquidity. Some banks use the proceeds from government securities to reinvest in treasury bills and bonds.

"The market continues to have a positive view (on the government's credit risk) brought by the recent fiscal report," Cruz said. The government earlier announced that its budget deficit for the first quarter stood at P67.6 billion, or lower than the program of P71.8 billion, due to higher-than-expected revenue collection. For 2006, the government expects to trim its full-year deficit to P125 billion from last year's P146.8 billion.

Cruz said the Treasury was considering reducing the volume of securities it would offer in the third quarter. The government is issuing P69 billion worth of treasury bills and bonds in the second quarter. It auctioned P132.6 billion worth of debt paper in the third quarter of last year.

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
KAGAWARAN NG KATARUNGAN
PANGASIWAAN SA PATALAAN NG LUPAIN
(LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY)
East Avenue cor. NIA Road
Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Republic of the Philippines
Delivery and Supply of Open Type Steel Shelves

The Land Registration Authority (LRA), through Special Allotment Release Order (SARO) No. BMB-C-05-0002248 intends to apply the sum of **PESOS: TWO MILLION FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE THOUSAND AND NINETY (P2,521,090.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payment for the delivery and supply of 559 open type Steel Shelves for the Land Registration Authority located at LRA Building, East Avenue corner NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City, to wit:

Articles and Specifications

Quantity	Unit	Description
559	units	Steel Shelves: open type; with five adjustable shelves, including top to bottom shelves; made from angular post 1.8mm x 1.5 x 1.5; Overall dimension: 72" x 36" x 18", with braces, bolts & nuts and mid support for shelves; painted with high grade gray baked auto enamel;gauge # 20.

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall automatically be rejected at Bid opening.

The Land Registration Authority (LRA) now invites eligible Bidders for the delivery and supply of 559 Open Type Steel Shelves. Delivery of the 559 OPEN TYPE STEEL SHELVES should be on or before September 01, 2006.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest on outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the Land Registration Authority and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8.00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders on **May 02 to 08, 2006** from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00). The method of payment will be on cash basis. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The Land Registration Authority will hold a Pre-Bid conference open to all interested bidders on **May 15, 2006, 10:00 a.m. on the 5th Floor, Multi-Purpose Hall, LRA Building**.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered on the 5th Floor, Multi-Purpose Hall, LRA Building on **May 29, 2006 at 10:00 a.m.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form and amount indicated in the Bidding Documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on **May 29, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. on the 5th Floor, Multi-Purpose Hall, LRA Building**. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Land Registration Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **EDILBERTO R. FELICIANO**
Chairman
LRA Bids and Awards Committee on
Procurement of Goods, Supplies and Materials
East Avenue corner NIA Road, Diliman, Q.C
Telefax nos. 925-65-74, 921-23-20

(PDI–April 18 & 25, 2006)

BOHOL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Maca-as, Tubigon, Bohol
Fax No. (038) 508-8095, Tel. No. (038) 508-0084, 508-0085

INVITATION FOR BIDS NO. 2006-02

The **BOHOL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.** (BOHECO-I) thru 5% reinvestment and general fund intends to procure various electrical materials and hardwares to be used in our coverage area.

Sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the abovementioned materials will be received by BOHECO-I at its main office in Maca-as, Tubigon, Bohol on or before May 4, 2006 at 2:30 P.M. at which time and place said proposal would be opened and read in the presence of bidders or their representatives.

The interested bidders may obtain information, secure list of bidding documents from BOHECO-I Main Office upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Pesos (Php1,680.00).

(Sgd.) **CARLOS B. ITABLE**
General Manager

(PDI–April 25, 2006)

LB (Land Bank) Realty
Development Corporation

INVITATION FOR ACCREDITATION AND
TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

All contractors, registered and/or classified as Small and/or Medium by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) for Buildings and Industrial Plant and preferably with experience in the construction of bank building or projects of identical scope of works and technology, are invited to apply for accreditation and pre-qualification and to submit their bids for the renovation/construction of following LBP BRANCH OFFICES.

LBP PROJECTS

1. LBP - Legaspi (Albay) Building Construction
2. LBP - Tanauan (Batangas) Building Construction
3. LBP - Iloilo Branch Renovation

Pre-qualification and Accreditation requirements may be obtained from the Purchasing Unit of the Land Bank Realty Development Corporation at 30th flr LBP Plaza, 1598 M.H. del Pilar corner J. Quintos Sts, Malate, Manila. LBRDC reserves the right to change the cost estimates, the date of issuance of bid documents, pre-bid conference, submission of bids and date of bidding. Due notice of changes shall however be communicated by LBRDC to invited bidders.

LBRDC likewise reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assume no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense or loss that they may incur in the preparation of their bid and to accept the bid most advantageous to the company.

For further details, please call **Eng'r. Jaime S. Mendoza/Allan G. Redondo/Aries L. Mendoza** at 405-7169 / 405-7402 / 405-7135

(Sgd.) **CONSUL GENERAL EDWARD L. FEREIRA**
Chairman-Committee on Bids and Awards

(PDI–April 25, 2006)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(Head Office)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors with current Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply for eligibility and to bid and if later found eligible, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title	Proposed Renovation of the Governor's Office – Phase 2
Scope of Work	Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision and other services and performing all operations necessary for the proposed **Renovation of the Governors Office – Phase 2** all in accordance with the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location	5th Floor, 5-Storey Building, A. Mabini St. cor. P. Ocampo, Manila
Approved Budget	One Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P1,500,000.00)
Source of Funding	BSP Corporate Funds
Contract Duration	Forty Five (45) calendar days
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)	
PCAB License	Registration Particulars of at least "Small B" (Building and Industrial Plant)
Contractor's Construction Experience	Should have completed within the last five (5) years (2001) to present) at least three (3) projects involving interior fit-out works or construction.; renovation of commercial : corporate offices such as office buildings, banks or financial institutions involving high end finishes or similar projects one of which costs not less than seven hundred fifty thousand pesos (P750,000.00)
Certification of Satisfactory Performance	Should be able to submit certificates of satisfactory performance from the client of the declared completed similar projects For those contractors who have previously done / completed BSP project/s, the certificate/s of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank for said project/s must be submitted
Net Financial Contracting Capacity	At least One Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P1,500,000.00) *computed as 10 x (current asset less current liabilities) minus (value of all on-going contractors including awarded yet to be started)*
Or	
Credit Line or Cash Deposit Certificate	At least One Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (P150,000.00)
Eligibility Statement Forms	
Cost of Forms	Five Hundred Pesos per set (P500.00/set)
Date of Issuance	April 26 to May 08, 2006 / 9:00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.
Deadline of Submission	May 12, 2006 . 10:00 AM
Notice of Eligibility-Ineligibility	
Date of Issuance	May 18, 2006 / 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Bid : Tender documents Issuance	Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00)
Date of Issuance	May 19 to 22, 2006 / 9:00 AM to 1.00 PM
Pre-Bid Conference	
Date and time	May 26, 2006 / 9:30 AM
Venue	MR2A, 2nd Floor, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St., Manila
Submission and Opening of Bids	
Deadline of Submission	June 13, 2006 / 2:00 PM

For inquiries, please call **BAC Secretariat – telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143**

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor – Five Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St., Manila

The schedule of bid activities from the issuance of **notice of eligibility / ineligibility** up to the deadline of **submission of bids** may be subject to change.

The provisions of **Republic Act No. 9184** and its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall govern relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractor whose bid is evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obliged to compensate / indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUNIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI – April 25 & May 5, 2006)

Sugar growers urged to raise production

By Christine A. Gaylican

PHILIPPINE SUGAR PRODUCERS ARE URGED to invest more in the country's sugar industry to increase production and meet the anticipated global demand for the alternative sugar-based fuel ethanol.

The volatile prices of fossil fuels will place more pressure on the price and supply of sugar in the world market, as the cheaper by-product ethanol is now being used as an alternative engine fuel, according to an economist.

The Philippine sugar industry is among the Asian economies that, over the years, have limited their investments that hampered growth in production, International Sugar Organization economist Lindsay Jolly said.

During a presentation yesterday at the International Sugar Development Forum in Makati City, Jolly said that sugar producers like the Philippines have focused on keeping sugar prices at competitive levels.

But he pointed out that such action has influenced price spikes in the world market due to increasing demand.

"Essentially, low world prices have acted as a huge disincentive to invest and, even today, producers are worried about expanding (their sugar farms) in fear of prices falling," Jolly said.

This lack of investment in primary production in countries like the Philippines has created a problem for the market, given the rising demand, the imminent decline in the exports of the European Union, and the diversion of Brazilian cane from sugar to ethanol, Jolly added.

He pointed out that the limited investments in sugar production have resulted in a yearly 2.2-million-metric ton supply shortfall in the international market, pushing prices to breach the 12 US cents per pound mark.

According to Jolly, sugar prices in the world market will continue to hover within the range of 16 to 18 US cents per pound as demand is still relatively high.

"There is a potential for this deficit to fall because better production in countries like Thailand, India, Brazil and the Philippines, is anticipated," he said.

Toyota unit to issue ₱1.5B in 5-yr notes

TOYOTA FINANCIAL SERVICES PHILIPpines has approved the issuance of fixed rate five-year corporate notes worth P1.5 billion.

During the signing of the commercial documents, TFSPH executive vice president Ikuo Taguchi said proceeds of the exercise would be used to finance the company's expanded automotive financing operations to better serve its customers given the increased demand for Toyota vehicles.

The strong peso and positive investment trends in the country's financial sector fuel aggressive movements in the automotive manufacturing and marketing sectors, in particular, and the overall economic activities.

TFSPH president Dexter Pasion said, "the issuance, shows Toyota's respect and commitment to its host society by participating in the development of the capital market. It is also a concrete manifestation of the company's confidence in the positive economic uptakes as evidenced by recent developments in the Philippine financial and monetary environments."

He added that the growing market demand for the various models of passenger cars and commercial vehicles of Toyota would further boost the development of the local automotive industry.

It said the note issuance was expected to further enhance the dynamic commercial and industrial activities that would benefit not only the financing company but also the manufacturing company, Toyota Motor Philippines, their employees, dealers, parts and services suppliers and workers.

The notes were arranged by Standard Chartered Bank.

TFSPH made a similar offering of three-year corporate notes worth P500 million last December. The strong demand for TFSPH corporate notes led to this second issuance.

IP agency opens online trademark registration

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFfice yesterday announced it had started processing trademark registrations over the Internet to allow small and medium-sized enterprises to enjoy the protection of IP rights.

IPO Director General Adrian S. Cristobal Jr. said the agency's Trademark Electronic Filing System or TM Online was its contribution to the national governments e-Governance campaign.

Cristobal said that the service was among the highlights of the IPO's celebrations of World Copyright Day on April 23 and World IP Day on April 26.

The official explained that TM Online, which is a joint project with Equitable PCI Bank, is a secure web-based electronic filing system for applications for the registration of trademarks, service marks, geographical indications and other marks of ownership.

Cristobal said that IP Philippines has one of the most advanced automated systems in Southeast Asia.

IPO data show that the agency has received a total of 24,975 trademark applications in the past two years.

Fingerprint Bundy Clock System
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- PC not included (you may use existing PC)
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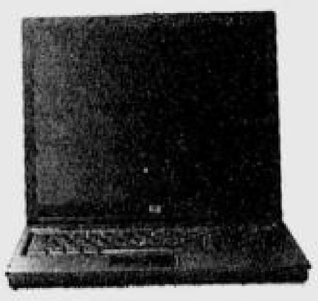

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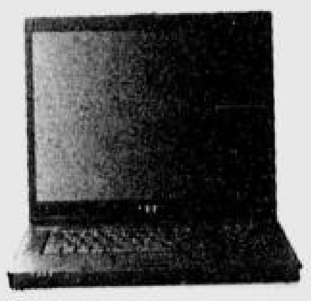
^ Processor 740 (2MB L2 Cache, 1.73GHz, 533MHz FSB)



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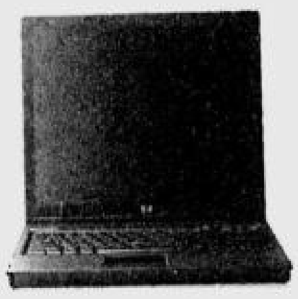
^ Processor 740 (2MB L2 Cache, 1.73GHz, 533MHz FSB)



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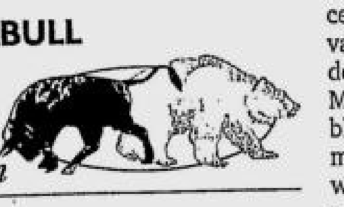
Philex surpasses all expectations

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

SOME READERS WERE DISAPPOINTED THAT I did not write a humorous article about our vacation to Singapore but nothing funny happened there, except in the plane. Singapore Airlines provides small TV sets in the back of every seat. You also have a video control with no instructions and a set of headphone. I am absolutely hopeless with remote controls but it did not take long for my daughter to figure out how everything worked. So when we started using the video controls in the plane, my daughter was soon playing games, answering quizzes and watching movies. All I could get was the altitude, air speed, the outside temperature and the estimated time of arrival in Manila.

Too proud to ask for her help, I started jabbing at the numerous colored buttons, purely at random. The first one lit up our three seats and switched off the starboard engine. The second one tilted my seat back 15 degrees and upset hot coffee over the unfortunate passenger behind me. But it was the third button that gave me a terrible fright. An old lady had just gone into the toilet about five rows in front of me. I jabbed the blue button twice and there followed a terrible sucking sound and a loud scream. When the cabin crew eventually forced the door open, all they found was a pair of shoes. I hope I was not responsible.

***

THE FIRST quarter results from Philex surpassed my wildest expectations. I had calculated P450 million for the first quarter but when I returned from Singapore, I noticed that there were two shipments in March instead of one, so I increased my forecast to P550 million plus. Next day, the figures appeared on Bloomberg as P574.5 million, so now my P2 billion becomes more attainable. The analyst briefing is on Thursday and it should be enlightening.

The shares rose to P4.25 and although my P5.60 target remains for next year, I told my subscribers and clients who bought at P1.64 to P1.80, to sell half at P4 or better. This is a sensible defensive ploy that I adopted because I am risk-averse and this leaves them with the other half costing less than zero. If PX goes down, they can buy it back cheaper: If it goes up, they have a huge profit plus their original capital to invest in my next hot stock.

The commodity markets have been rising exponentially in recent months and all the charts are so overbought that we should have a correction soon. Gold is at a 25-year high but copper, zinc, aluminum, nickel, platinum and silver are mostly at all-time highs, climbing vertically on the charts. Volatility has become extreme. On Thursday night, gold opened $14 an ounce higher but closed $12 lower, a reversal of $26 in one day. Silver, at its highest ever, had its May futures delivery fall by the greatest amount since 1983. It is like being in a sea with a tsunami approaching. If Nostradamus were alive, he would not venture to predict what would happen in the next few weeks. Nor will I.

Over the long term, I am more confident because China's GDP in the first quarter grew by 10.2 percent and industrial production by 16.2 percent. India is also expanding its infrastructure rapidly and is aiming at double-digit growth. These two countries account for 2.4 billion people, 40 percent of the world's population. Japan has at last turned the corner and is now hiring workers and expanding production after 12 years of stagnation. Japan is the world's second largest economy so the global outlook remains favorable.

As mining share prices closely mirror the metal prices, you have to be on your mettle. The simplest way is to subscribe to Kitco.com and you will receive two newsletters a day, at 12-hour intervals. I do not know how you go about buying gold in the Philippines but shares have much greater volatility and are far easier to trade.

Non-producing mining shares went up in sympathy but I regard them as a poor second choice. Look what happened to Manila Mining. MA went up .034 after the company announced it had permission to explore 740 hectares in Surigao del Norte, its Kalayaan mine adjacent to Philex. Two days later, Environment Secretary Reyes angrily denied the company's claim and threatened to file civil and criminal charges against the company. MA has fallen to .024 and speculators got burned.

It has since transpired that MA has a permit issued by the previous secretary and it is conceivable that the MA people thought it was valid. To prevent further escalation and defuse the situation, it would be prudent for MA to apologize to Secretary Reyes for its blunder. Then, after a suitable period, he might be inclined to endorse the permit, which is in his office awaiting approval. I would not sell MA at this price.

My other hot stock, Paxys has risen from its IPO price (adjusted for the one to two rights issue at P1) by a factor of 3.5 times. It has surged from P2.80 to P9.60 in less than two years. Profits rose by 176 percent to P339 million in 2005 from P123 million in the previous year.. The number of seats increased from 800 at the beginning of 2004 to over 3,000 at the end of 2005.

The call center industry is expected to grow by 50 percent to 60 percent this year and continue growing until 2010. With nothing to fear, I did not advise subscribers to sell any of their holdings. The company is expanding horizontally, vertically and geographically. It is looking to Europe and Australia, where it is planning a P10-million acquisition. This will broaden the company's product and service offering in the business processing outsourcing sector. I will re-establish my contact with PAX and comment further next week on its future.

The Phisix has risen to a 7-year high, largely due to a P45 rise in TEL to P2000. I recommended this stock back in 2003 at P226 so it has multiplied nine times, a feat that I do not expect to repeat. Teves and his team have done well on the fiscal side and Tetangco has done a good job running the central bank. Interest rates are at an 11-year low and balancing the budget by 2008 seems possible so we might expect an upgrade before the year end.

The Supreme Court's unanimous decision to disallow EO 404 opens the door to further discussions on the fertilizer scam and the Garci tapes. The peaceful political situation, which had prevailed for several months looks like coming to an end. Another attempt to unseat President Arroyo looks likely in May and June and whatever the result, foreign investors will be deterred and local investors will be tempted to cash in some of their profits. I feel investors should be taking profits and be at least 50 percent liquid at this point.

Due to May 1 being a holiday, my next article will appear on Wednesday, May 3. *Mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Ayala expanding Cebu ventures

₱2B set aside for more commercial space, residential development

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE AYALA GROUP IS EARMARKING P2 billion for capital expenditure this year to expand projects in Cebu, including a high-end residential development and additional commercial space in its mall complex in the city.

Francis O. Monera, chief operating officer of Ayala Land Inc.'s Visayas and Mindanao group, said in an interview the firm's investments in 2006 would cover the second phase of its Amara residential development.

Monera was in Makati City yesterday to represent the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry during the Metro Manila leg of the promotion of the Cebu Business Month in June.

The official said phase 2 of Amara, which would be launched later this year, would cover of five hectares of property to be subdivided into 96 lots.

"We have allotted at least P1 billion for development costs," he said.

The official added that Phase 2's launching would follow last year's "blockbuster" launch of the first of five phases covering 46 hectares in Liloan town.

"Phase 1, which has 112 lots, was sold out within two weeks after we launched it last October," Monera said. "Lots were priced between P5,800 and P9,800 per square meter."

Also, he said the Ayala group was adding 13,500 square meters of commercial space in its Ayala Center at a cost of P800 million.

The additional space would be about a fifth of the mall complex's existing 70,000 square meters.

"There is a big demand for retail space in Cebu," Monera said. "The additional space would be available for occupancy in the first quarter of 2007."

Ayala's development projects in the island include the 50-hectare Cebu Business Park which hosts the Ayala Center and the Marriott Hotel; the Cebu Sports Club, and the 24-hectare Asia Town information technology park.

Registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, Asia Town hosts electronics manufacturers, including NEC and Epson, as well as IT-enabled service firms and call centers such as e-Telecare and People Support.

"We are exerting more effort in promoting our projects as we anticipate the continued growth of businesses in Cebu," Monera said. "For instance, Asia Town has at least 5 hectares of property that have yet to be developed."

Monera said the Ayala group had so far invested about P5 billion in Cebu through Cebu Holdings, where it has a 47-percent stake.

Philex posts 377% increase in income

By Christine A. Gaylican

PHILEX MINING CORP. SAID ITS CONsolidated net income jumped 377 percent to P574.5 million in the first three months of the year from P120.4 million recorded in the same period last year.

Philex said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange that the profit increase could be attributed to higher volume of concentrate shipments—20,082 tons containing 9.4 million pounds of copper and 25,425 ounces of gold—during the period.

"The high metal prices in the world market—$2.50 per pound of copper and $561 per ounce of gold, up from last year's $1.49 per pound and $405 per ounce, respectively—boosted the quarter's operating revenue to P2.1 billion, much higher than the P1.2 billion recorded in the full year of 2005," the company said.

Philex Mining Corp. president and CEO Walter Brown said the company should be able to maintain its earnings growth momentum this year on account of favorable metal prices.

"We feel we can sustain the strong earnings growth provided metal prices remain at these levels," he said in an interview.

Analysts estimated Philex' average gold selling price at $430 an ounce last year.

Philex produces copper, gold and silver, and gold bullion from its copper-gold mine in Padcal, a town in the northern province of Benguet.

Its gold bullion goes to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas mint and gold refinery and Johnson Matthey Plc of England, while copper concentrates are sold to either Nippon Mining Co. of Japan or to Philippine Associated Smelter and Refinery.

Padcal's mine life is estimated to run up to 2011. The company is currently exploring other mine sites, including a gold-copper mine in Boyongan town in Surigao del Norte, Philex said in an earlier report.

Brown, however, said if metal prices would remain high, the Padcal mine life could be extended by one to two years. Earlier estimates of the mine's life span were based on prices lower than current level.

The company has yet to disclose its total metal production last year but as of Sept. 30, 2005, the company said it shipped 59,306 tons of concentrates that included 28.4 million pounds of copper and 63,342 ounces of gold, up from 46,981 tons of concentrates in the same period the previous year.

Total holding off additional investments in LPG business

By Abigail L. Ho

WHILE KEEN ON BEEFING UP ITS LIQUEFIED petroleum gas business, Total (Philippines) Corp. is not likely to infuse additional investments in the sector unless illegal refilling and counterfeiting activities in the country are curbed.

In a briefing yesterday, Total managing director Anna Whitehouse said that while there was no directive from the oil firm's parent firm not to infuse more cash into its LPG business, the company was not keen on doing so at this time at it was suffering losses due to illegal activities.

"There's an issue on some groups using our cylinders. How can we invest if there's something like that happening? We need to control what's out there first before investing in new cylinders," she said.

"Until those issues are resolved, we'll have to hold off our investments to a minimum," she added.

She said the oil firm was now working with industry group Philippine Institute of Petroleum, of which oil majors Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. were members, to come up with ways to curb counterfeiting and illegal refilling activities.

Total was fully supportive of the government's efforts to eliminate such illegal activities in the sector, she added.

The energy, trade and local government departments have formed a multi-agency task force that will run after LPG dealers that engage in illegal and unsafe business practices.

Task Force LPG will curb, if not eliminate, the rampant use of under-filled, dilapidated, uncertified and unsafe LPG cylinders, which pose serious threats to public safety and security.

It will also clamp down on those doing illegal practices such as tampering, altering or modifying of cylinders through changing the valve, and re-painting or re-labeling by any entity other than the legitimate owner of the cylinders.

According to data from the Department of Energy, out of the 1,175 LPG establishments that the DOE and Department of Trade and Industry inspected last year, as many as 896 or 76 percent were found to be selling unbranded and tampered cylinders, under-filled tanks, and defective tanks that had no tare weight, serial number and appropriate seals.

Without stating an exact amount, Whitehouse said Total suffered huge losses each year due to illegal activities in the LPG industry.

Total has invested about P50 million for the establishment of two LPG refilling stations in Taguig and Pasig.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 24, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.95	4.45	3.95	4.45	269,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35.5	35	35.5	57,300
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62	62	62	62	185,100
China Banking Corp.	800	800	800	800	3,210
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.49	0.5	0.48	0.48	1,340,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	70.5	71.5	69.5	71.5	52,800
International Exch. Bank	33	33	32.5	32.5	87,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	39.5	39.5	39	39.5	752,700
Philippine National Bank	34	34.5	34	34.5	15,300
Phil. Savings Bank	37.5	38	37.5	38	1,900
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.75	7,200
Security Bank Corp.	46.5	47	46.5	47	190,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	39	39	38.5	38.5	5,800
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	20,000
First Abacus Financial	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	50,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	28	28.5	28	28	45,200
Manulife Financial Corp.	3265	3290	3265	3290	750
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	190	190	185	185	120,900
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2160	2160	2160	2160	300
Ivantage Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	11,283,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	45	45	44.5	45	697,200
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45	45	44.5	44.5	140,600
Manila Electric Co. A	13	13.25	13	13.25	10,800
Manila Electric Co. B	19.5	19.5	19.25	19.25	357,300
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.4	1,265,000
Petron Corp.	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.35	16,991,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.21	0.23	0.205	0.23	520,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	3,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	250,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	35,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	5,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	21.25	21.25	21	21	215,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36	36.5	36	36	166,700
Pancake House Inc.	4.15	4.15	4.15	4.15	11,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3	3.05	2.95	2.95	886,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60	60.5	60	60.5	159,800
San Miguel Corp. B	81.5	81.5	80.5	81	85,000
Universal Robina Corp.	20.75	21.25	20.75	21	1,781,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	310,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	1,400,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.44	1.46	4,145,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.8	1,350,000
CHEMICALS					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	280,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	30,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	2,400,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	3,300,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.6	0.6	0.55	0.55	520,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	16,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	12,000,000
Ayala Corp.	370	370	360	360	27,930
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	210,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	15,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	4,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	203,000
APC Group Inc.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.215	900,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	341,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.97	0.97	0.95	0.95	710,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	2,810,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.95	3.95	3.8	3.8	1,994,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3	3.05	3	3	8,224,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	450,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.3	815,000
Pacifica	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	10,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	2,550,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	1,580,000
SM Investments Corp.	233	236	226	230	218,740
South China Resources Inc.	0.85	0.87	0.85	0.87	600,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0725	0.075	0.07	0.07	35,000,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.13	0.12	0.12	5,900,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.75	7,938,500
Belle Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.22	1.22	4,790,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.31	1,120,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2	2.02	2	2	523,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	20,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	400,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.67	0.68	18,250,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	400,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	80,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	2,177,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.05	60,000
Interport Res.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	3,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	1,150,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.42	1.5	1.42	1.44	108,464,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.27	1,400,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.27	220,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	200,000
Polar Property Holdings	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.8	54,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	9.3	9.6	9.3	9.5	303,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	2,530,000
SM Development Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.6	1.62	169,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.8	3,074,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	500,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13	13	12.75	12.75	37,500
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	9,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.96	0.97	0.95	0.97	3,430,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	880	890	875	885	27,670
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.85	2.9	802,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1945	1990	1945	1990	150,160
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	900,000
Imperial Res.	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	22,200,000
Ionics Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	170,000
IPVG Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	20,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	8,900,000
Philweb Corp.	0.028	0.029	0.026	0.027	212,000,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	118,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.68	3,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.75	12.25	11.75	12.25	1,461,900
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	20,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.34	1.34	1.26	1.26	27,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,140,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.68	1.72	1.68	1.72	321,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	300,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.56	0.59	0.53	0.56	6,480,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.55	3.7	3.5	3.5	370,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.02	2.08	2	2	950,000
Paxys Inc	9.6	9.6	9.4	9.4	475,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	3	3.05	2.65	2.65	6,236,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	3	3	2.7	2.7	3,849,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	94,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.5	7.6	7.3	7.4	2,516,000
Benguet Corp. A	13.25	13.25	11.25	11.5	167,500
Benguet Corp. B	35	35	35	35	100
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.02	2.02	1.96	1.96	53,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.4	0.4	0.36	0.37	25,390,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.39	11,030,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.026	0.024	0.024	629,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.03	0.03	0.028	0.028	162,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0075	0.0075	566,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4	4.15	4	4.1	4,694,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.05	4.15	4.05	4.1	11,651,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	31	31	30	30	279,300
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	1,800,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.44	0.45	0.43	0.43	820,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	5,640,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	506,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	232,100,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.82	0.98	0.82	0.91	4,750,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.84	0.97	0.84	0.92	1,790,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	7.5	8	7.2	7.2	2,271,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,600
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,200
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	13	13.25	13	13	332,000

CURRENCIES

April 24, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.810110	1.000000	51.6580
Japan	Yen	0.006949	0.008578	0.4431
United Kingdom	Pound	1.443778	1.782200	92.0649
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.104475	0.128964	6.6620
Switzerland	Franc	0.635032	0.783883	40.4938
Canada	Dollar	0.712185	0.879121	45.4136
Singapore	Dollar	0.507906	0.626959	32.3874
Australia	Dollar	0.602985	0.744325	38.4503
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.149061	2.652801	137.0384
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.216017	0.266652	13.7747
Brunei	Dollar	0.506319	0.625000	32.2863
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000092	0.000113	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.021397	0.026413	1.3644
UAE	Dirham	0.220588	0.272294	14.0662
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.234400	63.7666
Argentina	Peso	0.265175	0.327332	16.9093
Brazil	Real	0.382145	0.471720	24.3681
Denmark	Kroner	0.134007	0.165418	8.5452
India	Rupee	0.017983	0.022198	1.1467
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.221462	0.273373	14.1219
Mexico	New Peso	0.073330	0.090518	4.6760
New Zealand	Dollar	0.513117	0.633392	32.7198
Norway	Kroner	0.127438	0.157309	8.1263
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013517	0.016686	0.8620
South Africa	Rand	0.135301	0.167015	8.6277
Korea	Won	0.000854	0.001054	0.0544
Sweden	Kroner	0.107216	0.132347	6.8368
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025109	0.030994	1.6011
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000378	0.000466	0.0241

JESUSA M. SERRANO

wife of the late **Gregorio Serrano**
of Tabaco, Albay & Davao City

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on April 21, 2006 at the age of 85.

Her loving children **Gloria & Moises (†), Sis. Ave, Rudy & Salve, Ben & Lily, Ric & Paz, Ed & Yam**; grandchildren **Grace & Jey, Tettet & Jun, Dondon, Diday, Gohoy, Lira, Niño, Ching, Lui, Mike, Abby**; great grandchildren **Danini, Mico, Kenken, Kaykay** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Cosmopolitan Memorial Chapel, Davao City.

Interment will be announced later.

CONSTANTE V. VENTURA

Died in the Grace of our Lord on April 23, 2006 at the age of 81.

He is survived by his wife **Sylvia Mendez Ventura**; children **Victor** and **Perla Sugay, Marisa** and **Hugo Diaz-Etchevehere, Cynthia** and **Barry Sugarman, Gina** and **Carlo Pablo**; brother **Angelo**; sisters **Linda Sherman, Lyna Ventura** and **Sr. Virginia Ventura**; and 12 grandchildren.

His body lies in state at Sta. Rita Parish Church in Philamlife Homes, Quezon City. A Memorial service will be held at the Church on Wednesday, April 26, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. Cremation will follow.

The Management and Employees of

Chinatrust (Philippines) Commercial Bank Corporation

condole with the family of

Harry Y. Uy

Vice President and Cebu Financial Center Head

who passed away on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, April 22, 2006, at age 38.

He is survived by wife, Jane, and children, Ian and Hannah.

Interment will be at the Cebu Memorial Park after the 7 am Mass and cremation.

We request readers to pray for the repose of his soul and strength for his family to overcome this trying time in their lives. Harry will be surely missed.

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NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
Valeriana G. Contreras	Chapel C-12a Quezon City	to be announced	Himlayang Pilipino
Purificacion C. Latoja	Chapel B-5, Q.C.	04/26/06; 8:30 a.m.	Holy Cross Mem. Park

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Col. PEDRO REYES LAZO, M.D.

Died in the Grace of the Lord on April 21, 2006 at the age of 71, in Cagayan de Oro City.

He is survived by his devoted wife **Renee**; siblings **Fidela (†), Felicidad (†), Corazon, Concepcion, Elias Jr. (†), Delfina, Baby** and **Arturo (†)**; beloved children **Bong & Cecile, Jaja & Lime, Viet & Tony, Chippy & Aimee**; loving grandchildren **Intoy, Issa, Nica, Bootskie, Sofia, Mara, Joaquin** and **Baby Renee**, nephews & nieces, family & friends.

His remains lie in state at Greenhills Memorial Home, Cagayan de Oro City.

Interment will be at Greenhills Memorial Park, Bulua, Cagayan de Oro City immediately after the 8:00 am Holy Mass at the Sacred Heart Church, RER Subd., Kauswagan, Cagayan de Oro City on Thursday, April 27, 2006.

LUZ CORTEZ vda. de MAGPILI

(Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro)

Peacefully joined her Creator on April 23, 2006.

Her husband **Mauro Sr. (†)**; children & children-in-law **Myrna & Renato Pascua, Linda & Benjamin Guilles, Veronica & Danilo Victoria, Atty. Mario (†) & Prof. Polly Magpili, Engr. Ariel & Vicky Magpili, Ambassador Mai & Engr. Eligio Jimenez, Mauro Jr. & Cristy Magpili, Dra. Raelene Hernandez, Maricel & Alejandro Hernandez**; her grandchildren **Myrene, Michael & Kristine, Michelle, BJ & Stephanie, Lynbel & Arjun Binalla, Aaron, Mark & Rachelle, Honey Anne & Anthony Villanueva, Melissa, Mylene & Ariel Pinto, Rachele & Nido Calida, Niña, Mauro, Marco, Arvi & Mico Garcia, Lira & Arman Tesoro, Diego, Ana, Kristoff & Tere, Kaye, Carlo, Mikha, Richard, Gabriel, Anica, Ayra, Roma, Andrew, Beau, Chantelle, Danica, Elena, Fiona, Gabrielle**; her great grandchildren **Miguel, Matthew, Stephan, Jasmin, Ayizhja, Alyza, Shiela, Bogz, Gabo, Andrei, Jason, KT, Jake, Trishia** request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Masses will be celebrated at the following churches for the duration of the wake:

Our Lady of the Pillar, Las Piñas City
U.S.T. Church, Sampaloc, Manila
Mary Queen of Apostles Parish, Sucat, Parañaque City
Our Lady of Fatima, Binacayan, Cavite City
San Lorenzo Ruiz Church, Bacoor, Cavite City
Sto. Niño Cathedral, Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro
Sacred Heart Church, Cagayan de Oro City
San Pedro Cathedral, Davao City
Adelina Chapel St. Magdalene, Lipa City
Holy Spirit Church, Sydney, Australia

Her remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Thursday, April 27, 2006, 3:00 p.m. at the Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

"Come to Mé, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

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Message of Thanks

"To you alone, O LORD, to you alone, and not to us must glory be given because of your constant love and faithfulness." — Psalm 115:1

Retired Judge Martin Pedro E. Badong, Jr.

of Naga City
June 29, 1932-March 24, 2006
Ateneo de Naga High School 1950
Ateneo Law School 1956
Regional Trial Court Judge from 1987 to 2002

We, the loving wife, **OLIVE**; children **Peñafrancia "Penny"(†)** and **Rollen Sarte, Manuel Martin "Bong", Dave** and **Rocha Reyes, Lorenzo "Larry"** and **Veronica Claveria**; and grandchildren **BoomBoom, Shawn, Frystinne, Isobel, Chyna, Chloe** and **Zoe**, wish to convey our heartfelt gratitude to all of you who paid their last respect, offered material and financial support, masses and prayers, sent flowers, patiently kept vigil, comforted us, attended the funeral rites and in many immeasurable ways condoled with us in our most difficult times.

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Pag-IBIG's Quimbo inducted as PHILSSA president

THE PAG-IBIG FUND PRESIDENT AND CEO Romero Federico S. Quimbo urged the country's social security agencies to work harder together for better services and greater relevance during his induction as the new president of the Philippine Social Security Association (PHILSSA). PHILSSA is the umbrella organization composed of the Armed Forces of the Philippines – Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AFP-RSBS), Employees Compensation Commission (ECC), Government Service Insurance Corporation (GSIS), Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), Philippine Heath Insurance Commission (Philhealth), Social Security System (SSS) and the Pag-IBIG Fund. Quimbo outlined his plans for what he called "the country's social security team" based on specific objectives.

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In '07, remittances still seen up

BSP cites growth in overseas workforce, better prospects

By Michelle V. Remo

REMITTANCES FROM OVERSEAS FILIPINO workers are expected to grow by another 10 percent next year—and may even hit a new high of $13 billion—as more workers continue to be deployed abroad, according to the projections of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

For this year, the central bank said OFW remittances would likely hit $11.8 billion, or 10 percent higher than last year's record high of $10.7 billion.

"We already have a huge base, and while the global economy is seen to post growth, the growth would be modest," BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo told reporters.

The growth in OFW remittances was attributed not only to the increase in the number of Filipinos deployed abroad but also to the better job opportunities now available for Filipinos.

While OFWs used to be dominated by domestic helpers, the labor department said more and more Filipino professionals, like nurses and teachers, are now being counted among the ranks of overseas workers.

The increase in dollar inflows coming from OFWs, considered as modern-day heroes, was said to have significantly accounted for the country's gross domestic product growth of 4.8 percent last year and for the rise in the country's gross international reserves (GIR).

GIR, which measures the country's ability to meet import requirements and shield the peso from the depreciating effects of speculation, hit an all-time high of $20.84 billion as of March this year, or 1.2 percent higher than the P$20.59 billion recorded the previous month.

The dollar inflows from OFWs was also said to have boosted the peso's appreciation this year back to the 51-to-a-dollar level.

The government originally projected that the local currency would settle at an average of between 55 and 57 against the US dollar this year, but the peso's bullish movement prompted fiscal and monetary authorities to revise the exchange rate assumption to P51 to P53 to a dollar.

A stronger peso is welcomed by monetary authorities because it helps taper off inflation, given that the Philippines is an import-dependent country.

But while the increase in OFW remittances has its positive economic effects, the same is said to reflect the lack of job opportunities in the country or that income earned here is not competitive with those offered in other countries.

Also, the BSP expects growth in 2007 to be similar to this year's 10-percent growth forecast, given that the rise in deployment is seen to be slowing down.

Gov't eases concern over Q1 spending

THE BUDGET DEPARTMENT IS TRYING TO allay investors' fears over the high spending in the first quarter of the year, saying the government's pump-priming initiative does not mean it will abandon its target of reducing the budget deficit to P125 billion this year.

"As we disburse funds, we are not taking our eyes off the deficit meter," Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said.

The government may be committed to carrying out the bulk of its programmed expenditures this early, but the spending "will taper off in the homestretch," he said.

Andaya in a statement explained that the government is currently bent on pump-priming the economy. In order to accomplish this, he said the government had to design a fiscal program for the year in such a way that the bulk of the spending—along with its corresponding deficit limits—for the entire year would be carried out in the first few months.

He said spending on infrastructure should be done mostly in the first quarter, in time for the dry season.

"We are taking advantage of the good weather summer brings," Andaya said. "There is the threat of La Niña this year, so we're practically racing against time."

The statement was made in response to concerns that the government's strategy of concentrating the bulk of its expenses in the early part of the year might lead to a breach in the deficit target.

Some investors cited the events of 2002, when the government hit its full-year deficit target in the middle of 2002, and had difficulty controlling spending in the latter months of the year.

But Andaya said that the deficit in the first quarter of 2006 actually stood lower than programmed, indicating that the government would maintain its deficit target for the year.

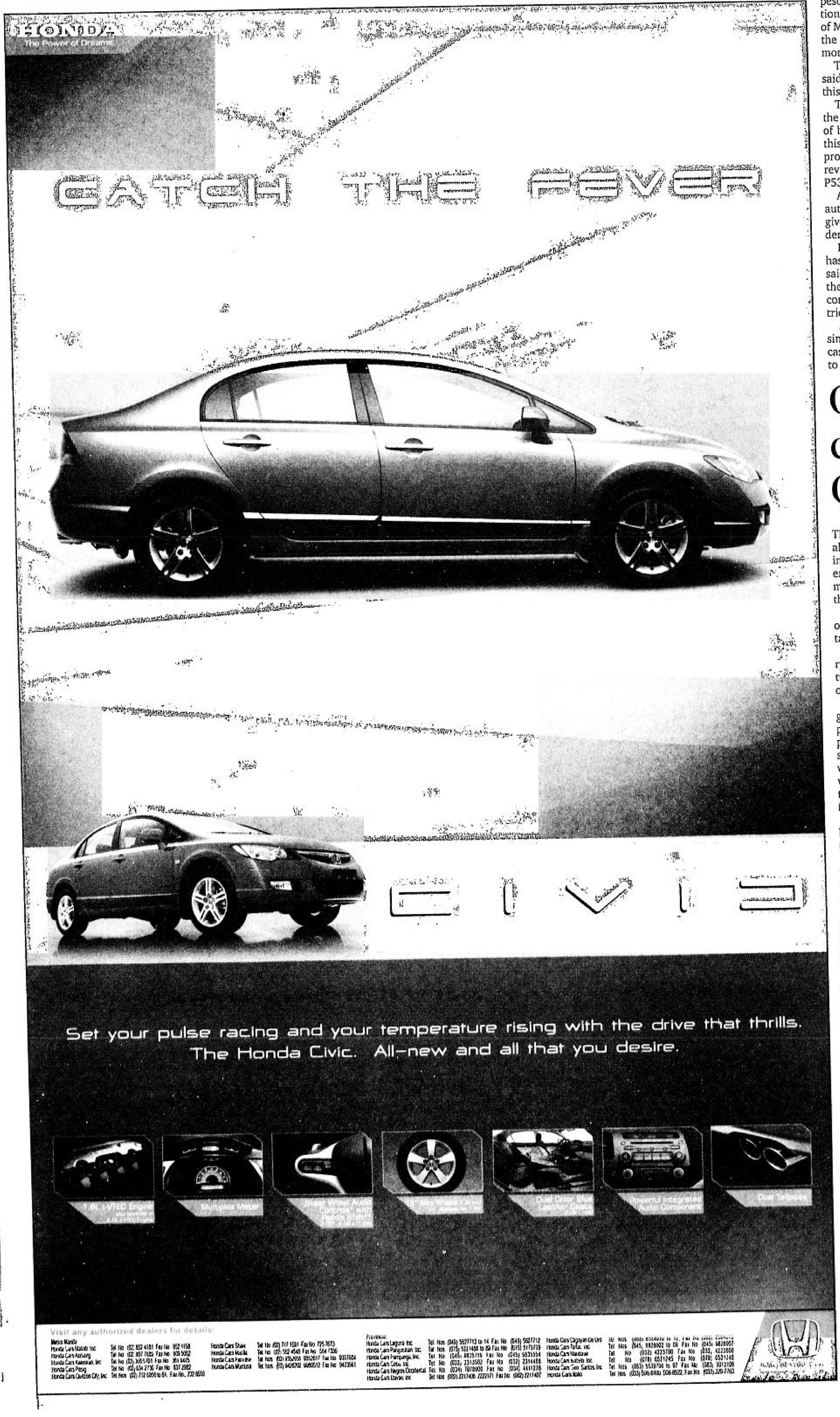
In the first quarter of this year, the government's actual budget deficit of P67.6 billion was lower than the expected P71.8 billion, which comprised 54 percent of the P125-billion deficit program for the entire year.

Under the government's fiscal program for 2006, the deficit ceiling was set at P71.8 billion in the first quarter, P18.6 billion in the second, P31.6 billion in the third, and only P2.9 billion in the fourth.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the events of 2002 was not comparable with 2006.

This year, he said, the government has improved revenue collections by implementing various tax measures, such as the VAT Reform Law.

Cruz said that while expenditures are frontloaded this year, these are backed up by the revenue gains from the tax measures. *Michelle V. Remo*



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LIFESTYLE

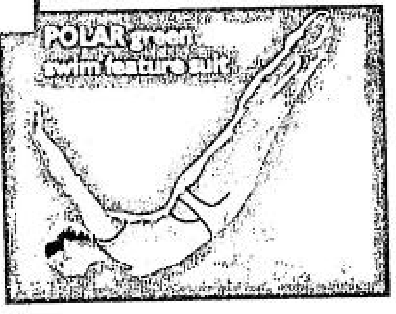
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Smart) or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

WHITE tennis jump suit, Fajera mid shoes

ORCHID gym strap top, pale-green run shorts, rebel-green 3/4-leg pants

HUSKY pink gym tank, white cover-up summer jacket, court-green cover-up woven shorts, Hasma shoes



POLAR green swim feature suit

Can Stella come out and play?

"I CAN'T WAIT TO GET you all out on the court!" said Stella McCartney. For years known as Beatle Paul McCartney's daughter, Stella has metamorphosed into a fabulous label as a fashion designer.

She said she had always wanted to do a tennis line. Lucky for her, Adidas came along. And now the sportswear company's spring/summer 2006 offerings are a grand slam collection of La Stella's running, gym, swim, training, warm-up and, of course, tennis wear. Not to mention sports shoes and accessories.

From snap tanks to tees and polos, from short shorts to short tights, from skirts to dresses, from crop jackets to coverups to jumpsuits—Adidas by Stella McCartney has a whole range of fashion choices for serious tennis belles. Also for runners, gym rats, swimmers and women who just feel most comfortable, and no less chic, in sportswear.

The colors of summer are in quite a competition in McCartney's collection: white, pale yellow and electricity (bright yellow); pale, light cypress, polar and court green; dusty rose and husky pink; calypso (burnt orange) and pop (neon red-orange).

Flip open an Adidas catalogue or hie over to an Adidas store and you will be sure to invite Paul McCartney's little girl over to play.

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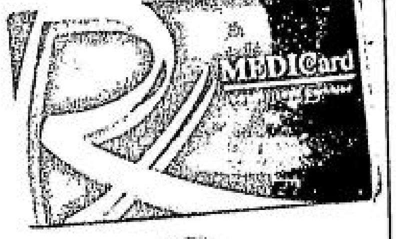

How is leukemia diagnosed and treated?

Leukemia is the 6th leading cause of death and the 7th leading cause of cancer in the Philippines, the most common cause of malignancy in children comprising about 13%. Sixty percent (60%) of these are seen in less than 15 years of age. Leukemia can be acute or chronic. Acute lymphocytic leukemia being the most common and more seen in children while acute myelogenous leukemia is common in adults. Signs and symptoms of leukemia are nonspecific like pallor, fatigue, bleeding and hematomas. Patients can have recurrent infection and fever, joint pains or difficulty of breathing in relation to a mediastinal mass. Diagnosis is done morphologically via a peripheral blood smear or bone marrow biopsy. A basic leukemia panel. will help in the prognosis and treatment. Treatment is aggressive chemotherapy, and bone marrow transplant for high risk acute lymphocytic leukemia. Supportive care is necessary for control of infection, nutrition, pain and blood support. It is important to consult your doctor if you have anemia, bleeding, persistent infections or fever.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from Baguio City, Dr. Jasmin V. Reyes-Igama. Dra. Jasmin to most of her patients and colleagues is an Internist, a Hematologist and a medical Oncologist who finished her medical degree at UERMMMC. She took her specialty course for Internal Medicine at Baguio General Hospital Medical Center and obtained her sub-specialization training for Hematology and Transfusion Medicine in 1986. She went to Paris, France for her Transfusion Medicine Rotation in 1990 and later completed her training for Medical Oncology in 1994. Dra. Igama is currently the president of the Philippine Society of Medical Oncology, a distinguished physician awardee for her work in voluntary blood donation and introducing component blood therapy by the Philippine National Red Cross and the DOH. She is also a board member and committe chair for RUV, HMO, Philhealth: Philippine College of Physicians. She is married to Dr. Alfredo Igama and blessed with four boys. MEDICard members may visit her at St. Louis University of Sacred Heart School Hospital at Basement Annex Room N3B13 Mondays to Fridays from 12noon-2pm.

Nicky

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

MEDICard PHILIPPINES, INC.: 9th floor Sagittarius Building H.V. dela Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227 Trunkline: 88-4-9999, Fax No.: 894-5720, 810-3856 Text: Key in MEDICARD and send to 2344 (Globe & Touch Mobile) or 4627 (Smart & Talk N Text) E-mail: inquiry@medicardphils.com Website: www.medicardphils.com

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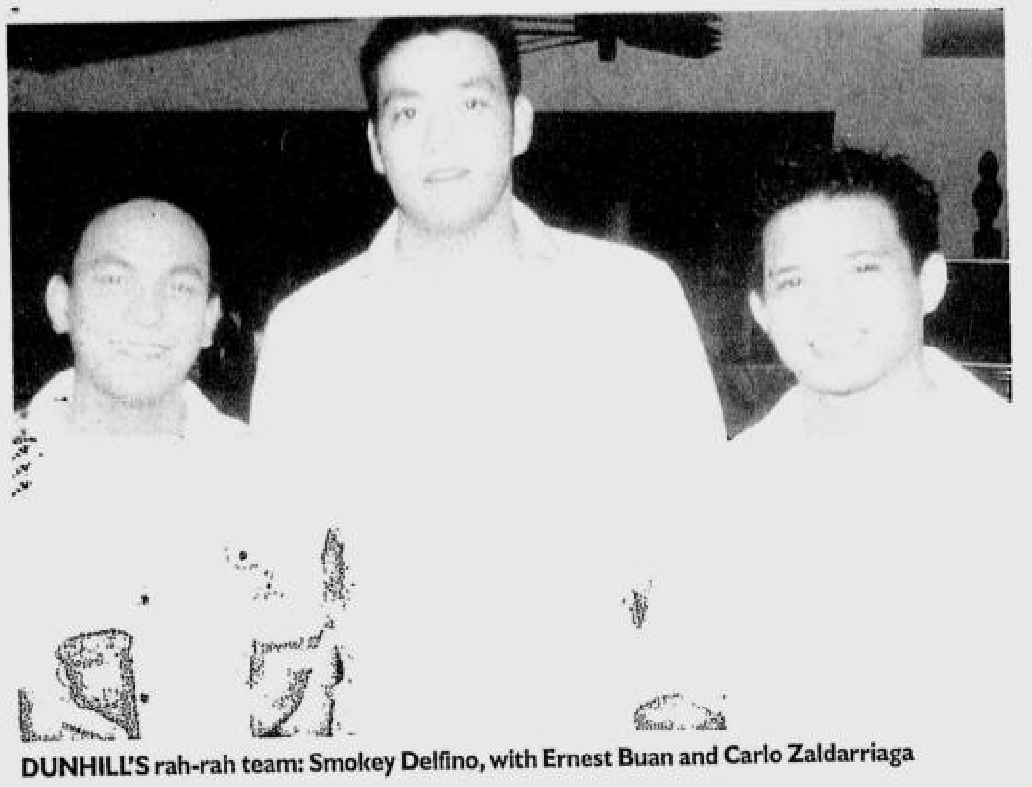


DUNHILL'S rah-rah team: Smokey Delfino, with Ernest Buan and Carlo Zaldarriaga

Awesome beach party away from the beach

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

A REFRESHING INFINITY POOL SURrounded by powdery beach sand, over 200 of *Manille*'s fashionable faces and most sought-after party people, free-flowing bar, beautiful models in the latest summer luxe outfits and the country's top DJs all in one night, *palanggas*...

Well, dahlings, this perfection can be expected only from that luxury tobacco brand, Dunhill, which threw an awesome beach party to rival the best that Boracay, St. Tropez or Ibiza could offer. And it was held in a, take note, *palanggas*, sprawling mansion in the most exclusive of Makati addresses.

Perfection is what Dunhill gives us in all its events and activities. For this fab happening, the popular brand paid tribute to select individuals "whose dedication to perfection in all of their endeavors is reflected in everything that they do."

The breathtaking home of mega realtor **Jacques Dupasquier** was a fantastic manifestation of Dunhill's philosophy.

One of *Manille*'s top developers and businessmen, Jacques' love for perfection in all of his endeavors is reflected in his own home. No less than those celebrated gals with beauty and brains, **Anna Sy** and the Almario sisters, architect and interior designers, respectively, worked their masterful brilliance in several areas of the house.

A candle-lined red carpet welcomed us to the expansive pool/beach area. We were serenaded by the distinct musical vibe of guest DJ and top designer **Rhett Eala**.

The fun began early. Beautiful host **Bianca Valerio** got this special event rolling by introducing "the creative pillar of Dunhill's Dimensions." The opening number by a ballet troupe put a modern spin on a traditional dance that has been delighting the royal courts since the 16th century. It was the aperitif for the scorching hot bikini fashion show of Loungeri Lux by multifaceted designer **Celine Lopez**; Minx by attractive **Princess Sarte**; Cocotini by the trio of gorgeous lookers **Linnet Aguirre**, **Amina Aranaz-Alunan** and **Mia Villavicencio**; and USwim by young mover and shaker, eye-catching **Hindy Tantoco**.

The four hot, hot swimwear labels showcased the perfection of the ooh-la-la female form that provided the designers inspiration. The fantastic makeup on the drop-dead gorgeous models was done by another pillar of perfection, Shu Uemura! But who else, *palanggas*?

Popular DJ **Manolet Dario** brought his brand of perfection through rocking music for his set of three hot-hot hours, followed by hot young mega organizer, hip PR and super DJ GP Reyes, keeping the beautiful invitees rocking and rolling till way past 3 a.m., *palanggas*.

The fab happening is still being talked about. And to think it was only the first in a series of unique and incomparable events like the Coconut Palace wow event and the smashingly successful Club Paraw gig in Boracay that had superstar DJ **Kaskade** jetting in for yet another awesome evening of partying to perfection the Dunhill way, *palanggas*. Hey, cool, huh?

Time-tested

The 10th anniversary celebration of Citibank Phils.' Binondo branch at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in downtown *Manille* was a night for celebrating time-tested partnership and commitment to prosperity, *palanggas*.

More than 300 hot invitees attended the private affair that also marked the Chinese Year of the Fire Dog. The event not only recognized the bank's long and faithful partnership with the Filipino-Chinese community, it also ushered in, in style, another 12 months of prosperity for the CitiGold Wealth Management clients.

Citibank Philippines retail banking director **Ailene Litonjua**, together with marketing head **Sari Pascual** and Binondo branch manager **Marion Kohchet-Chua**, welcomed the guests.

In her speech, Ailene L said, "It has been a privilege to serve your banking needs, assisting you in growing and managing your wealth for a secure financial future. Citibank Phils., in particular the Binondo branch, is where you can find the best service from our officers and staff."

Binondo, Manila, was Citibank Phils.' original home when it first opened in the country back in 1902. Then known as International Banking Corp., its first office was a leased stable converted to a bank. In 1996, it reestablished itself in Chinatown in its current home at Plaza del Conde.

During the affair, the country's largest foreign bank gave each client a small replica of Circle of Life, an artwork by renowned feng shui artist **Lizanne Uychaco**.

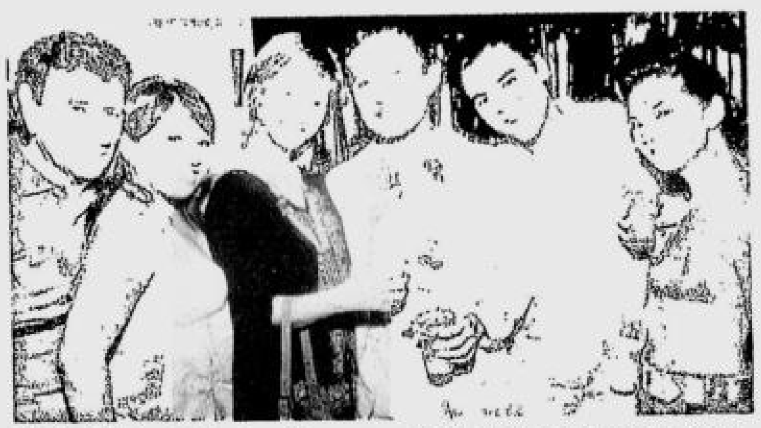
Another highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Joy, Beauty and Luck collection of Keleo, a Hong Kong fine jewelry brand now exclusively distributed in the country by Rustan's, by Keleo director **Hans Chong**. The feast of the senses was made complete with the excellently prepared dishes—guaranteed to bring "joy, beauty, luck" and good chi or good fortune to its diners, natch, by Li Li restaurant executive chef **Winki Choi**.

The fab raffle draw was held in true traditional Chinese style. Each lucky winner was plucked from the *angpao* tree. Exciting prizes included an 18-carat white-gold Keleo Rainbow of Love dangling earrings, Nokia cell phones, digital cameras, Citibank watches, and superb Van Aspereh Cabernet Sauvignon wines.

The top prize was a three-day, two-night trip for two to Singapore.

The Year of the Dog, like the last 103 years, portend good fortune for Citibank Phils. and its CitiGold Wealth Management clients, happily explained to us by brand manager Marion Kohchet-Chua.

Leave it to Citibank to make everybody's life smooth, dahlings.



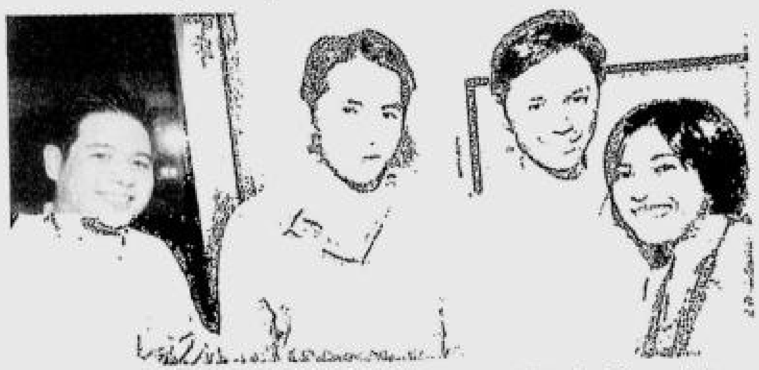
MOI with Tina Tinio, Jenni Epperson, DJ Montano, JM Rodriguez and Cat Arambulo

PRETTY Chicho Suarez, Embassy's main man Eric Cua and fun Michelle Pamintuan

CENTURY Properties' Jigger Antonio and ladylove May Muñoz

LOUIE Ysmael with designer Celine Lopez

DESIGNERS Mia Villavicencio, Amina Aranaz-Alunan and Linnet Aguirre



RENE Barbier's Fro Oliva, southern boy Joleon Tañada, Motorola's hardworking marketing manager Mari Litonjua and Pia Campos

KING and beautiful model Joey Mead, with L'Oreal's Leica Carpo and Atom Henares

LOLITA Ty and Kerwin Chua

SARI Pascual and feng shui artist Lizanne Uychaco

CIRIACO and Erlinda Lapid

VICKY Yu and vivacious Marion Kohchet-Chua

KELEO'S Kenneth Chong, Rustan's Gigi Mabanta and Luzanne Manlapit, and Citibank Philippines' Ailene Litonjua

DR. LUCIANO Ong and wife Helen, Hans and Kenneth Chong, Mellie Romero A. and husband Louie Ablaza

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Is déjà vu a form of epilepsy?

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

MANY WHO ARE SKEPTICAL ABOUT supernatural and paranormal things and who will not even bother to read on those subjects will suddenly reverse their opinion when they personally encounter something quite out of the ordinary. Some of these extraordinary experiences may be trivial, but others are of a profound nature.

Take the case of reader Sara Jane, a nurse from Bacolod. Since childhood, she had been experiencing a lot of psychic stuff. In high school, she noticed that people she quarreled with would get hurt or seriously ill.

Unseen protectors

She seems to be protected by unseen creatures. Once, she started to cross the street then wanted to go back when she reached the middle. But she couldn't move her feet. Just then a speeding car passed her. Had she taken one step forward, she would have been run over.

When Sara was in college, she would visualize a particular guy and imagine him to be her boyfriend, the two of them going out on dates. Soon he would indeed become her boyfriend. And this happened more than once.

Another strange experience she had: "As a kid, I accidentally broke the door knob. The lock was stuck. I didn't know what to do, worried that my mom would get mad at me when she learned what happened. I fell asleep and dreamed of a man's hand teaching me how to fix the door knob. When I woke up the next morning and saw the door knob, I remembered my dream very clearly. I did what my dream taught me. I simply pushed the button while turning the door knob and it was fixed."

In another dream, she was being taught by a guy how to use roller blades. She was then in the elementary. The guy told her how to maintain her balance by forming a V pattern. When she used roller blades for the first time, her friends were amazed that she knew what to do.

"I thought I was just a fast learner," she said. The same thing happened when she enrolled in karatedo (a form of martial arts). The instructor was surprised at how fast she learned compared with others who had been studying longer than her.

She wanted to know how to harness or develop her psychic powers to help other people better. She also wanted my explanation for déjà vu because, according to her, medical science explained it as a form of epilepsy connected to a disturbance in the temporal lobe of the brain. "Do you have another explanation?"

Already seen

Let me answer this last question first. I don't agree that déjà vu is a form of epilepsy or hallucination, as some people claim. For me, déjà vu or "already seen" is caused by any of the following: A person dreams of a future event but soon forgets it. When s/he is in the actual situation s/he saw in his/her dream, s/he would recall that s/he had already seen the situation/event because it had been registered in his/her nervous system. Or s/he might have had a spontaneous precognitive or prophetic vision, but forgot it.

When s/he is in the actual situation, s/he remembers having experienced or seen the event before, because s/he dreamed it.

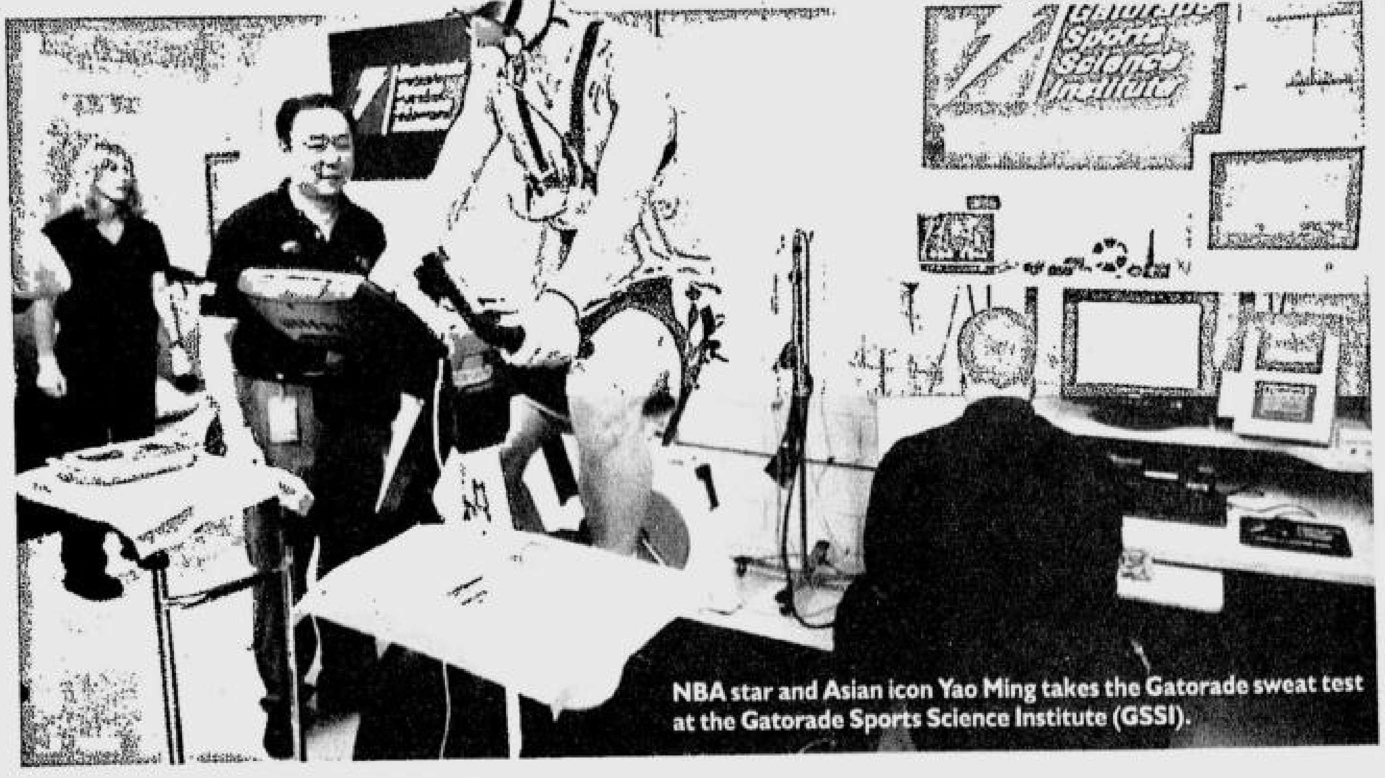
Déjà vu could also be due to a memory of an event in a past life. A person may go to an old cathedral or building that s/he had been to in a past life. The visit triggers his/her soul memory to remember the place. This has actually happened to several people I know, and even to me. When I was in France and Egypt, I felt I had been in those countries before. I saw things familiar to me although I'd never seen them before in this life.

Sara's childhood and college experiences show she has invisible spirit protectors or guides that protect her from physical harm and from her enemies. It is they who hurt or retaliate against her enemies. She is able to get what she wants through visualization because she has a strong mind.

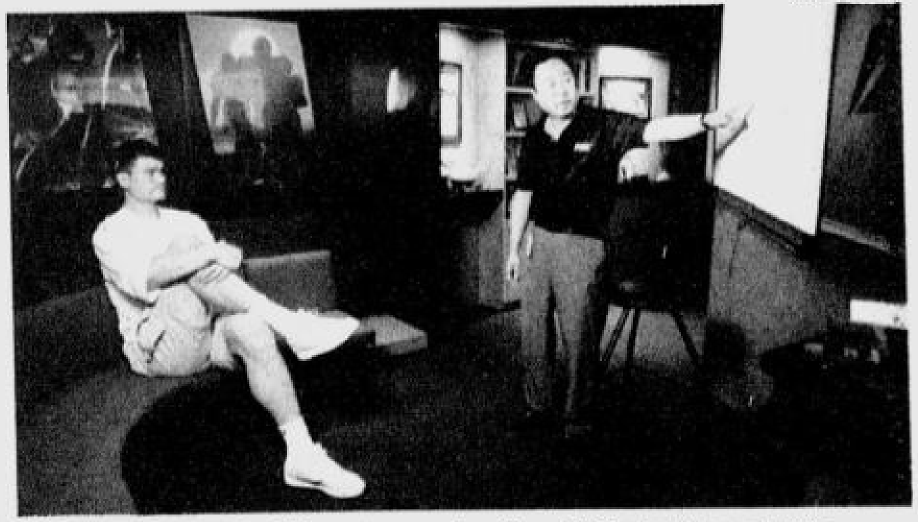
She's really a psychic. Her psychic abilities manifest both in the waking state as well as in the dream state. She is able to psychically communicate with others, without her knowing it. Because her rational mind is very strong, being in a medical profession, she has to suppress her intuitive and imaginative nature most of the time.

If she learns how to control, develop and manage her psychic gifts, she can use them for psychic or intuitive diagnosis of illness, healing and counseling. She will be able to help her patients much more than any other nurse whose third eye is not open.

Sara should read more books on the subject and attend professionally run seminars so she can be guided properly toward a safe development of her inner faculties. If interested, she can inquire at 8107245 or 8926806 about inner mind development courses and other services.



NBA star and Asian icon Yao Ming takes the Gatorade sweat test at the Gatorade Sports Science Institute (GSSI).



ACTIVE people like Yao Ming get suggestions from GSSI scientists on how to prevent cramping and heat illnesses as well as how to optimize performance. GSSI warns about the dangers of dehydration and fluid loss during sports and strenuous activity.

Go ahead, sweat it out

FILIPINO ATHLETES WILL UNDERGO this month the Gatorade sweat test to help enhance their performance and well-being.

The Gatorade Sports Science Institute (GSSI) has conducted almost two decades of "sweat tests" on numerous professional and amateur athletes from all over the world. The sweat test helps teach active people about the dangers of dehydration and fluid loss during sports and strenuous activity.

The tests establish the need to restore fluids the body loses through perspiration as a result of strenuous activities. Gatorade helps restore lost body fluids.

Test participants for the Philippine test include members of the Alaska Aces and the Far Eastern University Tamaraws, current champions of the University Athletic Association of the Phils.

GSSI head and senior scientist Dr. Xiacai Shi and Dr. George Canlas, Philippine representative in the Gatorade Asia advisory board, will supervise the activity.

GSSI is the world's largest privately funded sports science research facility. It focuses on helping athletes optimize their health and performance through research and education in hydration and nutrition science.

This is the second time the GSSI sweat test will be done in the Philippines.

Some world-class sports figures who have taken part in GSSI's tests are ironman Chris Leigh; basketball superstars Yao Ming and Vince Carter; New York Yankees baseball star Derek Jeter; the Miami Dolphins; the New York Giants; and European soccer teams Real Madrid, Juventus, and Manchester United.

NBA star Vince Carter is one of world-class athletes who underwent GSSI's sweat analysis and hydration assessment.

The GSSI sweat test consists of sweat analysis and hydration assessment. Sweat samples are collected from individual athletes to determine the concentration of electrolytes (sodium and potassium) lost through sweat.

The athlete is weighed before and after training to measure fluid-loss. Urine samples are also collected before exercise to measure how hydrated the athlete's are before starting exercise. The results allow GSSI scientists to make recommendations on how to prevent cramping and heat stroke and to optimize performance.

15 BLSS challengers named

FIFTEEN PEOPLE, RANGING in age from 19 to 64, are ready to challenge the Bert Lozada Swim School (BLSS) and its instructors to cure them of their fear of water.

They are the winners of the recent BLSS and Philippine Daily Inquirer Lifestyle promo "Help Me Conquer My Fear."

Each winner will get free swimming lessons under the BLSS' Confidence Booster Program and free swimsuit and gear from Speedo.

They will begin their month-long swimming classes next month. Exact dates and venues will be determined by BLSS.

They may claim their prizes from the INQUIRER Marketing Department (tel. 8978808 loc. 259 or 263) until May 5. Please bring a valid ID.

The winners are:

Zenaida A. Braga, 64, a resident of Quezon City who works as a secretary in a private company in Makati City;

Racquel D. Concepcion, 35, Caloocan City and an employee of the Bureau of Immigration;

Renato dela Cruz, 37, a resident of Las Piñas City who works in Makati City;

Ida Doctor Elopre, 44, a resident of Valenzuela City who is an event organizer/cultural worker;

Maria Rhodella S. Flores, 34, a resident of Pasay City and a Senate employee;

Ma. Gisela M. Galang, 37, a resident of Quezon City who holds office in Manila as a nonlife insurance executive;

Pacita Gelido, 43, a resident of Quezon City who works in Pasig City;

Evangeline Ignacio, 43, a resident of Mandaluyong City who works as a financial consultant/agent for an insurance company in Makati City and a balloon decorator;

Maribe A. Jocson, 43, a physician who lives in Antipolo City;

Ana Victoria R. Lloren, 22, originally from Tacloban City who works at the Institute of Chemistry of the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City:

Cleo Roda C. Nodado, 35, a resident of Quezon City who works as a product manager in Makati City;

Mark Anthony A. Pasco, 19, a resident of Mandaluyong City and student of Polytechnic University of the Philippines;

Maria Lerma Taña Portento, 25, a resident of Manila and an employee of a government office in Quezon City;

Angel Santillan Rivera, 39, a resident of Caloocan City and an employee of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City; and

Elmer J. Tan, 55, a self-employed certified public accountant who lives in Marikina City.

VANHEUSEN
TIMEX

ENRIQUE Zobel Cup winners

Keeping time at the games

SPORTS WATCH TIMEX TOOK TO THE fields at the high-energy, high-powered Enrique Zobel Memorial Polo Cup as the official timekeeper. The Enrique Zobel Cup, which was officially presented by leading dress shirt brand Van Heusen, was launched by Zobel's family to celebrate the visionary businessman's lifelong affair with horses and polo.

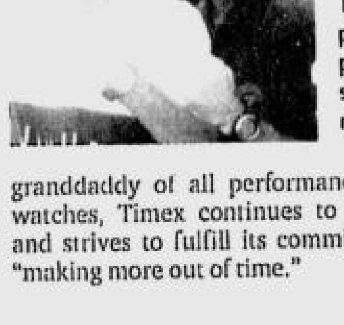
Even as a young child, Zobel—or EZ—was already riding horses with his father Don Jacobo Zobel. At age 10, he supervised the care and feeding of his family's ponies; at age 12 he was on the roster of players at the Manila Polo Club. EZ has played on polo fields around the world, bringing home prestige and countless trophies—such as the most prized King of Spain's Cup, which he won three years in a row. Beyond the game, EZ has practiced "polo diplomacy," bring together rules or previously unfriendly Asian nations.

Aside from keeping time, Timex also provided the prizes for the winning teams of the Low Goal and High Goal Match. The Blue Team, comprised of Mark Agustin, Iñigo Zobel, David Stirling and Mark Field won the High Goal Match; while Antonio Veloso, Dondi Santos, Jerome Hernandez and Gusi Aguirre of the White Team walked home as winners of the Low Goal Match.

LUCKY Warner Manning won a Timex.

KUMIKO Kuroda, Dee Zobel and Renee Speltz

During the breaks in the game—in between chukkers, in polo parlance—Timex also gave away Timex watches to three lucky guests, including Warner Manning, HSBC president and CEO-Philippines and Eduardo G. Vaca, director of Investments Financial Advisor Global Private Client, Merrill Lynch International Bank Ltd.



TIMEX provided prizes for some matches.

Known for the Ironman Triathlon, the granddaddy of all performance sports watches, Timex continues to innovate and strives to fulfill its commitment of "making more out of time."

Young light bearers of Parola

IN PAROLA, TONDO, A NEW GENERATION of leaders are helping a community wage war against poverty and neglect.

Calling themselves Kabataang Gabay ng Bayan (Kagabay), they regularly visit Lolita Bawic, 63, and more than 100 other people.

Kagabay met Bawic when it was going from door to door to register tuberculosis (TB) cases in the community. It did not occur to Bawic that her coughs, fever, weakness and lack of appetite were symptoms of TB, an infectious disease that could be deadly if ignored.

Kagabay members brought Bawic to the Fugoso Health Center, where she tested positive for TB. Doctors put her on a strict medical regimen, including a daily cocktail of antibiotics. They stressed the need not to miss a single day of medication, as this would undo positive results and may even worsen the disease.

To make sure she stuck to the program, a Kagabay member collected from the hospital the supply of medicines for one week and gave Bawic her daily dose.

After six months, she and 80 other Kagabay "patients" are better.

Accomplished

The success of the TB eradication program, "K! Aktibo!" ("Kagabay… Aksyon TB Out!"), made Kagabay one of the Ten Accomplished Youth Organizations (Tayo) in 2005.

The award is managed by Tayo Foundation, the National Youth Commission and KilosKo, with assistance from Coca-Cola Foundation Phils. Inc. It recognizes, rewards and encourages youth organizations with projects that help build their communities.

Kagabay converted its *tambayan*, the multi-purpose hall of Barangay 20 in Tondo, into a TB treatment facility.

K! Aktibo builds on the government's National TB Program that uses the directly observed treatment short course (DOTS) method, a comprehensive strategy endorsed by the World Health Organization and the International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases for detection and treatment. The strategy allows government health centers and hospitals to provide free diagnosis and medication to patients, provided a trained TB partner closely monitors them.

Jerome Polancos, a member of Kagabay's board of directors and a treatment partner, says it takes six to eight months of treatment to treat TB, with patients not missing a single day of medication.

TONDO'S NEW FACE. Members of Kagabay bravely help a community wage war against poverty and neglect.

If health practitioners are to ensure that patients are taking their medicines regularly, they have to administer them themselves. This means patients will have to spend P40 a day to travel from Parola to the Fugoso Health Center and back.

As a result, the rate of non-compliance is high. Alfred Elmido, chair of Kagabay, says. "*Imbes na mamasahe sila, pambibili na lang nila ng bigas o ng ulam yung pera nila.*"

Focused

In 2004, Kagabay launched K! Aktibo! and started "Tutok Gamutan," complementing the National TB program. Treatment partners bring the medicines to patients and make sure they take them, ensuring a high compliance and cure rate.

Out of Kagabay's 115 members, 25 are certified treatment partners, each caring for up to 24 TB patients.

Kagabay also conducts seminars on TB twice a month to make people aware of TB's cause, symptoms and treatment.

Support

With its Tayo award, Kagabay has been getting a lot of support from various multi-sectoral groups allowing the extension of K! Aktibo after the end of the contract between the United States Agency for International Development and the nongovernment Philippine Business for Social Progress.

Members sometimes use their own money and hold simple fundraising activities. They also join contests and use the prize money for the project.

Kagabay wants to make the program permanent. Says Elmido. "*Gusto talaga naming ituloy itong* project *na ito. At gusto pa namin siyang palakihin.*"

Calories may play hide-and-seek

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

IF YOU HAVE BEEN HONESTLY AND sincerely watching what you eat but are unable to achieve significant weight loss, there may be some calories in your diet that are playing hide-and-seek with you.

Unnecessary calories can lurk in many seemingly innocent foods. For example, you may think that soda crackers are low in calories. Think again. Some crackers in the market contain 40 calories apiece. Ten crackers will set you back 400 calories.

Diet food

It is easy to eat more than you should if you believe that low-fat, low-carb, or low-sugar food is equivalent to zero calories. Overeating can also happen if the food is bland and tasteless.

Take reduced calorie syrup, for instance. "Light" syrup has 100 calories per one-fourth cup while regular syrup has 200 calories. But many people don't find the light syrup sweet enough so they use double the amount. They may think they are saving calories when they are not.

Nibbling

I once knew someone who never ate a full meal because she was convinced that feeling full after a meal meant she ate too much and would get fat. So she nibbled her way through the day on "lightweight" things like dry cereal. She thought she was eating very little but all those nibbles added up to a lot of calories.

Another person I knew was very careful about what she ate at regular meals. She didn't take into account the nibbles when she cooked or baked for her family. After she realized her "taste tests" were ruining her figure, she was able to lose weight.

Liquid calories

Most people know better than to guzzle a liter or two of soft drinks if they are trying to lose weight. But some don't realize that excessive amounts of packaged iced teas, sports drinks and juices will also pack in the calories.

Specialty coffee mixtures can be calorie-traps because of whole milk, cream or flavored syrups. Ordinary brewed coffee can be full of excess calories if you load it up with creamers (nondairy or the real thing).

A client once wondered what made her gain a couple of pounds in a few weeks when "nothing much had changed" in her daily diet. What happened was she had gone a little crazy over a liquid flavored creamer, pouring it generously into her several cups of coffee daily. She regained her usual weight when she ended her love affair with the creamer.

Salads

Salad greens and other vegetables are low in calories but the oil or mayonnaise used for the dressing is not. Many people force themselves to eat "only" a salad for lunch thinking they are saving calories when, for the same amount of calories or even less, their stomachs and taste buds would be much happier with more substantial food.

Cooking oil

The first time someone said to me "but I thought food fried in XYZ cooking oil is not fattening," I thought it was a fluke. But I have heard the same statement repeatedly. There is a misconception that heart-healthy oil like canola or olive is less fattening than not-so-healthful oil like hydrogenated cooking oil. It is wise to remember that all oils have basically the same amount of calories—about 120 per tablespoon.

Cholesterol-free

"No cholesterol" does not mean no calories or very few calories. It simply means the food contains no cholesterol. Whether the food is fattening or not depends on how many calories it has per serving and how many servings you eat.

Alcohol

I don't know if it is wishful thinking, but some people believe alcoholic drinks have no calories. I have seen the shocked look on their faces when they start calculating how many calories they are actually drinking on their weekly "night on the town."

After doing some mental arithmetic about his favorite drink, one young man said, in a hushed voice, "That's 1,000 calories!" I did my own math and figured he was either having 10 single shots of tequila or five double shots (about 100-120 calories a shot). Either way, it was a lot of calories. And it did not include calories from the *pulutan* or pica-pica that accompanied the drinks.

Sauces

Many calories hide in the sauce of casserole dishes. If the sauce is cream- or butter-based, it contains hidden calories. If the sauce or gravy is made from the drippings of meat, pork or chicken, you can be sure there are unnecessary calories with every tablespoon you ladle onto your food.

Healthy but hefty

Except for vegetables, overly large portions of food will definitely hinder your weight-loss progress because you get more calories than you need. I put on 50 pounds with my second baby. I was eating healthy food but enough to feed triplets.

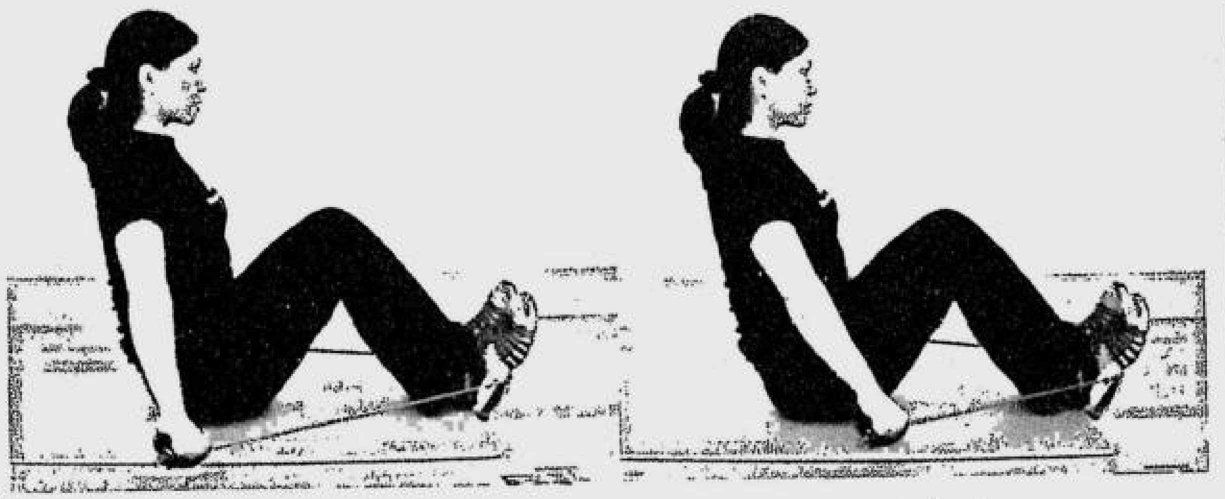
Some people make good nutritional choices but they just go a little wide on the number and size of servings.

If you want to lose weight, remember it isn't just what you eat but also how much you eat that is important.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Straight arm shoulder extension with rubberband



FIRMS AND TIGHTENS muscles at the back of the shoulders (rear deltoids) and at the sides of the upper back (latissimus dorsi)

Equipment:

Exercise mat and rubber band

Exercise technique:

1. Sit down on the mat with knees bent, feet flexed and rubber band hooked around the arches of your feet.

2. Keep your straight arms wider than shoulder width with palms facing backward and knuckles facing downward.

3. Pull the rubber band backward a few inches by bringing your shoulder blades together.

4. Slowly return to starting position.

5. Do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips:

1. Initiate the movement by squeezing your shoulder blades together rather than just pulling on the rubber band with your hands. You should feel the muscles contracting in the sides of your upper back.

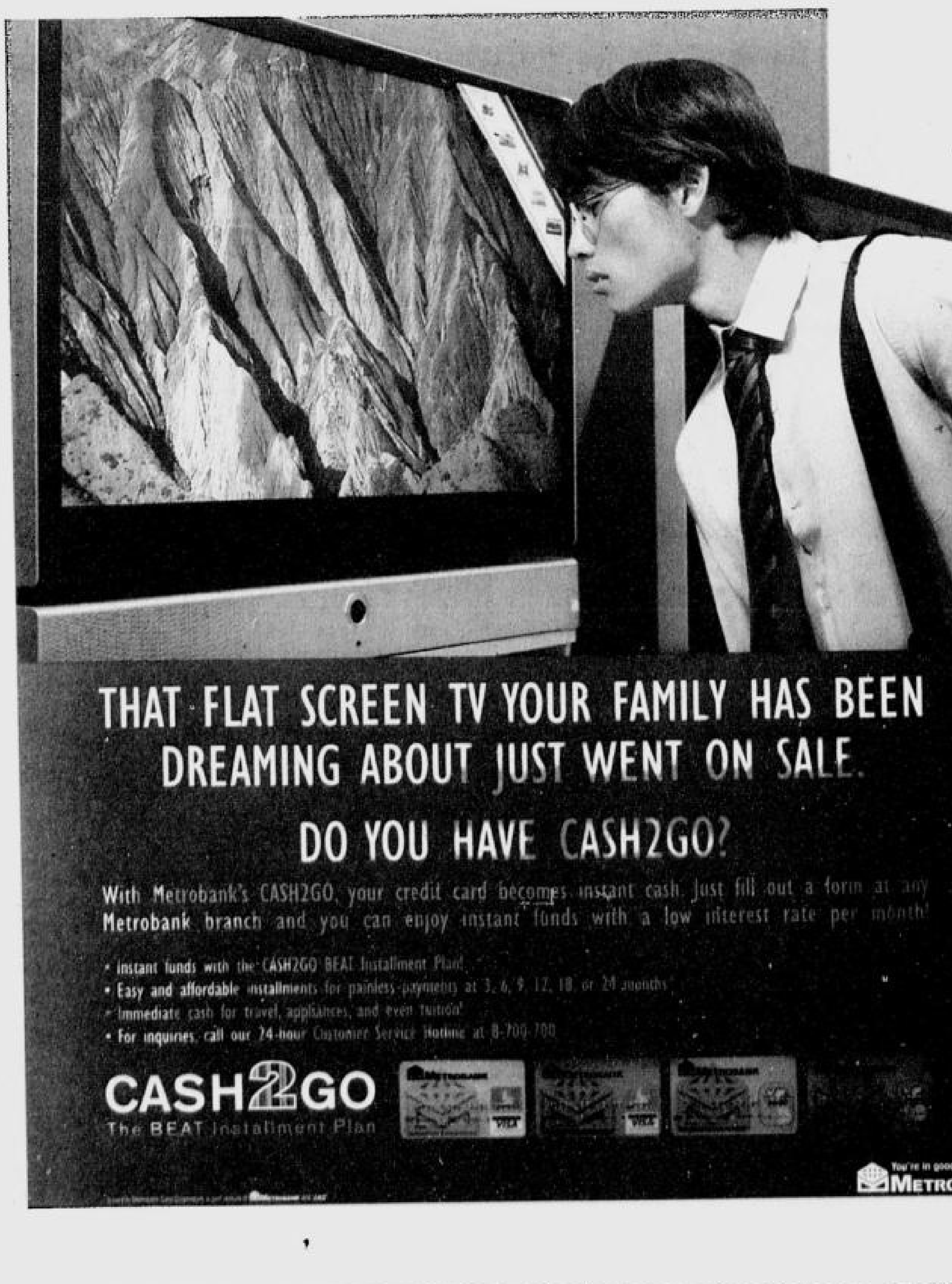
2. The movement in this exercise is subtle. Don't expect to move your arms backward with a large range of motion.

3. Pay special attention to the positioning of your hands and wrists. Keep your knuckles facing the mat so that your wrist stays in a straight alignment with your forearm. If your wrist bends as you do the exercise, you will place unnecessary stress on your wrist joint.

4. Watch that you don't lean forward with your head as you pull backward with the rubber band.

Repetitions:

Do 10-12 repetitions.



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Path to paradise

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

SOME ANCIENT BELIEFS SPOKE OF A mythical kingdom where men and women lived in near-perfect coexistence, where virtues like honesty, love and peace were highly regarded, and agelessness and optimum health were gifts from heaven.

A popular Tibetan legend is about a place, a remote, secret valley in the Himalayas. A 19th-century Buddhist teacher named Mipham wrote the Great Commentary on the Kalacakra containing directions to this paradise.

It was supposed to be across the river Sita in a land divided by eight mountain ranges. In this mythical land, Shambhala was a palace where Rigden kings lived in a dimension beyond time, ready to return to Earth to save humanity.

Getting there

Some say the tale is not to be taken literally, but metaphorically. Others claim society has become enlightened and, having reached pure spiritual state, entered a celestial world.

But there are those who think it is completely mythical. Whatever the truth is, the stories are deeply rooted in the human desire to find a better place.

Path

Whether fact or fiction, this kingdom exists. For it is a pathway to warrior-ship. The word warrior comes from the Tibetan word *pawo*, one who is brave. Warrior-ship is the art of bravery.

The tradition of warrior-ship can be found in North and South American Indians, in Japanese samurai, in the legendary King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, in great biblical rulers like King David.

To achieve enlightened warrior-ship, not based on violence but on peace, here is a guideline for the contemporary warrior from the book "Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior" by Chogyam Trungpa:

- Do not be afraid of yourself—you have great force within you. Even in the face of great problems, you can still be heroic. If you allow fear to overcome you, selfishness sets in.
- Discover the basic goodness of life—look and see. Appreciate simple experiences. Connect with your world and awaken this goodness in you.
- Surrender to goodness—hear and touch. Allow goodness to flow into and through you, so that you become its vehicle (a helping hand, a comforting hug, listening ear).
- Harmonize mind and body—when there is unity of mind with body, there is gentleness. This leads to fearlessness—being able to respond to life with the vision of trust. Meditate. Pray. Seek moments of silence.
- Uplift yourself—you need not be overwhelmed by duties to fulfill expectations to be met. Because you know things are as they are now, you accept your situation with grace.
- Celebrate life's journey—make a personal discovery of life. Do the things that can make you feel whole and complete. Find your corner of peace inside you so that you can connect this with the world outside.

Graces

In a highly stressful world where one can feel out of balance, there is an inherent need to find equilibrium. Often, the easiest way to keep in sync is to go out of town.

In the spirit of Tibetan grace, there is a place of genuine serenity aptly called Chi (for energy) at the Shangri-La Mactan Island Resort and Spa. It is more than a sincere attempt to recreate a palace, perhaps similar to what the idyllic Shambhala might have been. You should start your journey to connect with your basic goodness here.

A garden path leads to a quaintly regal entrance. You are greeted by an oasis of wood, water and light. The sound of softly cascading pools immediately calms you while an exquisitely sculpted chandelier bathes you in an amber glow.

The senses await awakening, energies expect reviving with a menu of spa pleasures based on Eastern healing arts. One gets a short questionnaire as a cold towel and cup of soothing tea is served.

From your answers, special aromatherapy oils will be chosen according to your natural element—earth, water, fire, metal and wood.

Spa treatments include the standards like Thai, Swedish and *hilot*.

Aromavitality—two hours of gentle soothing massage, a combination of Swedish, Shiatsu and reflexology using aromatic oils to balance body rhythms.

Chi Balance—two hours acupressure and massage to build and move energy within the body using oriental herbs and oils.

Himalayan Healing Stones—two hours of healing with the use of warm stones on your body to relieve stressful muscles and remove aches and soreness.

Water Shiatsu—2 1/2 hours of unique water massage and mind-body therapy in a heated pool to relax a stiff body and reduce tension, making some satisfied customers feel "reborn."

You can choose from 15 villas and garden suites for couples, singles or families. Every door has a Tibetan name like *baskul* for the beginning; *cakra*, wheel of life; *gompa*, solitude.

You wear the luxurious cashmere robes and slippers. And, in the hands of expert masseurs and masseuses, you surrender to another dimension, one ruled by rose, cardamom, vetiver, lavender, *ylang-ylang*, chamomile.

With the power of touch, you are transported to the land of dreams.

When you wake up, your appetites are stimulated. Awaiting you is Chi's spa cuisine, pleasing the palate with light, nutritious, delicate grilled tuna, bowls of salads, ginger-spiced carrot soups and much more.

'Sparty'

Life need not be just a party. Why not make it a "sparty"? Indulging in healing pleasures is a better and safer way to celebrate.

Love and light!

Special thanks to Peggy Angeles, Timothy Wright and Sharon Samarista of Shangri-La Mactan